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Lectures on the pastoral
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LECTURES

ON THE

PASTORAL OFFICE,

DELIVERED TO THE

STUDENTS OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF VIRGINIA.

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P R E F A C E .

HAD the undersigned any reputation as an author to sustain, or were he in pursuit of one, he certainly would not publish the following Lectures. Of the sincerity of this declaration, the reader will not doubt, when he shall perceive how large a portion of the work, not merely as to sentiments, but also language, is borrowed from others. Although there is also much which is the result of the author's own reflections and experience ; yet that is of so plain and practical a character, and expressed in such unadorned language, that no one will impute to him the folly of expecting to acquire fame by it. Happily, however, for the cause of true piety, God has so ordained it, that one may be useful to others, without securing for himself any reputation for talents or learning. Diligence in using the labors of others, and in exerting one's own powers, however moderate, may effect something which, with God's blessing, may be useful. Such is the only merit claimed and hope cherished, for the following lectures. They have now been delivered for a number of years to the graduating class of the Theological Seminary of Virginia, during which time the wish has often been expressed by partial friends that they might one day be published. Nothing was further from the thoughts of the lecturer when they were first prepared. This will account for the fact, that in many instances quota-

tions are made, not only without referring to the book, chapter, or page, but even to the name of the author. Without going over all the volumes examined during the preparation of the lectures, and they were very many, it would be impossible at this time to assign numerous quotations to their proper authors. It is not improbable that in some few instances, sentences may be found, not even appearing as quotations, which are, nevertheless, the rightful property of others. This may be accounted for, not only by what has been said above, but from the fact, that not a few of the maxims and advices given, were taken from a treasury of such things which the author had been laying up during the last forty years for his own benefit, without recording the source from whence many of them were drawn. The subjects, however, are of so practical a nature, and the sentiments so undoubtedly true, that no question is likely to be raised as to the accuracy of the quotations.

It needs only to be added, that two considerations have led to the publication of the lectures at this time.

1. That the author might the better discharge his duty to the young candidates, by furnishing them with a text book which they may carefully study, and thus, by relieving him from the delivery of the lectures, enable him more thoroughly to examine the class, and more freely to expatiate on the subjects under consideration.

2. That if there be anything useful in them, others might have an opportunity of profiting thereby.

To the favor of that Being, without whose blessing no success can be hoped for, the volume is now humbly commended.

WILLIAM MEADE,

Bishop of the P. E. C. of Va.

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E R R A T A .

The reader is requested to correct, with his pencil, the following errors:

- Page 14, line 10, for "and" read *then*.
 " 25, " 4, for "cautious," read *courteous*.
 " 39, " 22, for "nee nec," read *nec nec*.
 " 51, " 21, for "not," "to," and "rid," read *non, tu* and *sed*.
 " 51, " 23, for "in scripture," read *and scripture*.
 " 80, " 14, for "also to," read *so as to*.
 " 80, " 27, after "many," insert *other things*.
 " 83, " 11, for "love," read *laws*.
 " 89, " 21, for "the empty," read *be empty*.
 " 89, " 25, for "too," read *more*.
 " 104, " 23, for "as the," read *is the*.
 " 118, " 5, insert "only," after *those*.
 " 119, " 10, for "nothing," read *much*.
 " 122, " 16, for "or industry," read *on industry*.
 " 127, " 27, for "system," read *subject*.
 " 130, " 7, for "reason," read *season*.
 " 132, " 7, for "respected," read *suspected*.
 " 154, " 19, for "hearts," read *hearers*.
 " 172, " 20, for "if not," read *though*.
 " 222, " 8, for "promised," read *promise*.
 " 224, " 15, for "in animo," read *ex animo*.
 " 225, " 9 & 10, for "on," in both, read *or*.
 " 228, " 24, for "urging," read *arguing*.
 " 233, " 7, for "nature," read *name*.
 " 235, " 23, for "record," read *second*.



LECTURE I.

ON THE POWER, RESPONSIBILITY, AND HOLINESS OF THE MINISTRY.

IN entering on these plain advices to my young friends who are soon to engage in the duties of the sacred office, it is of the first importance that they, as well as myself, be deeply impressed with the immense power, corresponding responsibility, and required holiness of the same ; not that we may be puffed up as some are with a vain conceit of ourselves, or be led to magnify our office unduly, but rather to wonder that such weak and foolish things, such earthen vessels, should be employed ; and, under a sense of our unworthiness and the greatness of the work, to cry out who is sufficient for these things, going to Him in whom alone our sufficiency is. That there is and ever has been, in all ages and countries, a mighty moral power over the hearts and minds of men, in that order denominated the Priesthood, is one of the best attested facts in universal history. For the promotion of good or ill, truth or falsehood, happiness or misery, they of all others have been most effective. So evil have they been in some

countries, that the friends of humanity have been tempted to wish their extinction. But God has not so willed. As any religion which has ever existed is better than none, so the most corrupt ministry has been better than none whatever.

With the priests of all the false religions of earth—corruptions as they were and are of the true faith—we have nothing to do; no, not even with that which God once gave to the Jewish Church, for it has long since been done away with all its sacrifices. Ours is that appointed by our Lord, when after having declared that all power was given unto him in heaven and earth, he bade the apostles go forth to preach the Gospel and make converts to his kingdom, promising his presence and blessing to them and his whole Church; calling them the salt of the earth, the light of the world, his stewards, ambassadors, ministers to bind or loose, remit or retain sins; that is, to preach his word, administer his sacraments, and exercise discipline in his Church below, and thus, as in all other ways, to be laborers together with him. Then he bids us ever to remember that we have to give an account not of ourselves only, but of other souls unto God. Judgment is to begin at the house of God, and the severity of the trial and the weight of the penalty will be proportioned to the trust reposed. The witnesses against us will be lost souls, and perhaps they also will be among our executioners and tormentors. In accordance with what might be expected from the words of our commission and the titles bestowed on us, are the facts which the Christian Church in its eventful history presents to our view. If in the history of the Jewish nation it was ever “like priest, like people,” if evil pastors caused the people to err, and good ones led them in the right way, so has it been in the Christian. A due proportion has ever been seen between the wisdom, piety, and happiness of the ministry, and that of the people among whom they have labored. Nor is this wonderful, when we consider the

character and importance of the subjects committed to them, and compare them with those intrusted to the ruler, the general, and the philosopher. It is therefore a matter of unspeakable importance to each one of you to know, how you may so fulfil your ministry, as to be able to give in your account with joy and not with grief; with joy in presenting to Christ souls saved, in some degree through your instrumentality, and not with grief, because in a measure lost through your neglect or crime. Let us, then, consider the means of doing this great work, so as to please God and save men.

HOLINESS OF THE MINISTRY.

The first qualification I mention, is that of personal holiness. Wisdom, prudence, learning, zeal, a due setting apart for the office, are all in their proper place and measure important, and often mentioned as such in God's word; but all these may be, and yet avail almost nothing, except there be personal holiness. On this the emphasis is laid, "Take heed to thyself." "Keep thyself pure." "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." "Thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, meekness, patience." "In all things show thyself a pattern of good works, giving none offence, that the ministry be not blamed." Such are some of the laws laid down for the ministry. Our Lord and the apostles, not only gave these directions, but set us living patterns of the same. Our Lord did no sin. Satan found nothing in Him. He was entirely devoted to His work. St. Paul called upon his converts to follow him as he followed Christ. "Ye are our witnesses," he says, "how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves amongst you." "Ye have us for an ensample." With great propriety and force might he say to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an ensample of the believers in word, in

conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Let him be all this, and then no man would, or could despise him, though all men might despise one, however lofty his pretensions to priestly power, who was defective in these things. We may, doubtless, say with an eminent writer, that in ninety-nine cases out of an hundred, if a pastor is despised, he has himself to blame. It is a fact, well sustained by the history of God's Church, that success in the ministry is connected with holiness more than with any other gift of the Spirit. John the Baptist was first a burning and a shining light; and how many did he turn to God? What an awe did he strike into the soul of Herod, though his murderer? He feared John, for he was a righteous man. Luther's was the true doctrine: "*Ardere prius est, Lucere postea.*" "*Ardor mentis est lux doctrinæ.*" In no place, perhaps, was St. Paul's success greater than in Thessalonica, and it was to the people of that place he said, "ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you."

There is also something very peculiar, and surely not without design, in the manner in which it is said, "The hand of the Lord worketh mightily by the ministry of Barnabas, for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people were added to the Lord."

The same principle seems to be involved in the promise made to fervent prayer. It is not merely said that the prayer of the righteous availeth, but that "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much." What an argument is here in behalf of seeking a high degree of personal holiness; viz: that our prayers, and example, and preaching, may be proportionably blest, so that according to the promise we may be "clothed with righteousness," or as it is sometimes rendered, "with salvation," that we may have many seals to our ministry, may turn many to righteousness. On the

contrary, how dreadful the thought, that through neglect and want of this, others may suffer, souls be lost, as far as the sin of one can contribute to the ruin of another.

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE SUBJECT.

Such is clearly the doctrine of scripture, but is it that of the Church? Does not the twenty-sixth article seem to speak otherwise? Let us examine it. "Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gift diminished from such, as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them, which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men." It is indeed a most comfortable truth, that when pious persons, with true faith, come to the holy sacraments, seeking grace from God through them, God will not withhold his blessing because of the unworthiness of the instrument who administers the emblems, nor shall the official acts of bad ministers lose their validity so as to require repetition. But still the wickedness of ministers may hinder persons from coming with true piety to the ordinances, and, in many ways, lower the tone of religion among the people, and lead even the righteous into error; nor can we suppose that an ungodly minister is likely to prove as successful an instrument of conversion to the wicked, who will scarcely be persuaded to listen to his hypocritical discourses. The Church, well aware of this effect, goes on, therefore, in the same article to direct that proper measures be taken to avert this calamity, by excluding such persons from the ministry. All the canons for candidates and ministers of every grade, and her most solemn, heart-searching, and holy ordination services, are most expressly and admirably adapted to the purpose of securing personal piety, as she well knows how important an ingredient it is in the ministerial character, in order either to the happiness or

usefulness of the person clothed with it. A more happy, honorable, and useful character is not to be found on earth than a pious and faithful minister, whose life preaches, by example, the same things which his tongue utters from the pulpit; for the tongue can only persuade, while the life commands. On the other hand, there cannot be conceived a more unhappy and pitiable object than one who has mistaken his calling, or engaged in it from unworthy motives—whose feelings and conduct are in a different direction from those duties and studies in which the man of God takes his delight.

PERFECTION NOT NECESSARY.

What I have said will surely be sufficient to satisfy you of the propriety of beginning with this qualification as the most important, both on your own account and on that of others, and that I cannot be too emphatic concerning it. But lest you should be needlessly discouraged by any thing I may say, let me quote a remark of the pious Mr. Cecil, showing that perfection is not indispensable to success, that some defects will be in the best of characters. "God," he says, "by leaving his greatest servants to the natural operation of human frailty, in some part or other, of their character, has written on the face of the Christian Church 'cease ye from man.' He does by perfection of character as he did by the body of Moses, he hides it that it may not be idolized." But while I thus exclude perfection from the idea of the ministerial character, I must distinctly say, that as there is a certain holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, so there is a certain personal sanctity of heart and life without which no minister of Christ must either hope to be saved himself, or be the instrument of much good to others. To the attainment of this personal piety there are, in the ministerial profession, both helps and hindrances, which it becomes us to understand, rightly using the one, and carefully avoiding the

other. I do not mean that we must come to this personal holiness, by using certain helps to be found in the profession, for though God has in his mercy, and by the power of his grace, converted some few, such as Scott and Chalmers, after entering the ministry, yet it is an awful experiment and impious tempting of God. Erasmus well said, "he that would be Didacticos must first be Theodidacticos." To preach an unknown God, is worse than to worship an unknown God.

What I mean to say, then, is, that after entering the ministry with sincere motives, we have much to do in order to make full trial of it, not only by preaching, but by living the truth. "There will be life in our doctrine," said one, "When there is doctrine in our life," and he that would undertake to reprove the world, must be one whom the world cannot reprove.

It was one of the severest taunts ever cast on the ministry, when it was said, that "there are some who, by their sermons, show what religion is, and by their lives what it is not." The pious Cowper has but too faithfully drawn the character of such an one, after commending the opposite.

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
Some, decent in demeanor, while they preach,
That task performed, relapse into themselves,
And having spoken wisely, soon give proof,
Where'r was edified, themselves were not."

If even Cicero and Quintillian should lay it down as a principle in rhetoric that none but a good man can be an orator, how much more truly may it be said of the preacher of the Gospel. "A minister of an evil life," says Bishop Taylor, "cannot preach with that fervor and efficacy, that

life and spirit, with which a good man does. For besides that he does not himself understand all the secrets of religion, and the private inducements of the spirit, and the sweetness of internal joy, and the inexpressible advantages of holy peace; besides all this, he cannot heartily speak all that he knows. There is a fear, and there is a shame, and there is a guilt, and a secret willingness that the thing he preaches were not true, and some little private arts to lessen his own consent, and to take off the asperities and consequent trouble of a clear conviction." Wherefore St. Augustine, justly said, "*Ipsam obmutescere eloquentiam, si ægra sit conscientia.*" We must have the witness within ourselves, and be able to say, "We speak that we know." Knowing that the doctrine is of God, by having realized it within our hearts, and tried it in our lives, we can speak strongly and without fear of contradiction.

HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO MINISTERIAL HOLINESS.

Let us now, as we proposed, allude to certain helps and hindrances to the attainment of this holiness, which are incident to the ministerial profession. First, as to the helps. "The clergy have one great advantage," says Bishop Burnet, "beyond the rest of the world in this respect, that, whereas, the particular callings of other men prove to them great distractions, and lay many temptations in their way, to divert them from minding their high and holy calling of being Christians, it is quite otherwise with the clergy, for the more they follow their private callings, the more certainly do they advance their general one, the better priests they are, the better Christians do they become. Every part of their calling, when well performed, raises good thoughts, brings good ideas into the mind, and tends both to increase their knowledge, and quicken their sense of divine things. A priest, therefore, is more accountable to God and the

world for his deportment, and will be more severely accounted with, than any other person whatsoever." It is certainly true, that our study of the scriptures and other religious books, our private and public devotions, our intercourse with the religious, our visits to the sick and dying, and the solemn responsibilities ever resting upon us, are all of them calculated to be great helps to our piety. But then they must be diligently improved, otherwise they may be perverted into hindrances, may prove temptations to the contrary. There is one consideration belonging to our profession which ought never to be lost sight of. "By the original constitution of our nature, habit, which strengthens our active principles, weakens all passive impressions. The more frequently we feel or consider motives to piety, without really being excited to the practice of it, the feebler will be their influence upon us, the greater our inability, the more imminent our danger of never yielding to their force. This is an alarming truth to all human beings, but to the ministers of the Gospel more alarming than to others. We must revolve and preach the duties of religion so frequently that if they do not influence us early to sincere and steadfast piety, they must quickly become familiar and lose their power." These are the words of Mr. Smith, a Scotch Divine, whose lectures on the ministry I recommend to your frequent perusal. Mr. Bridges, also, in his excellent work on the ministry, has enlarged very admirably on this danger. "Do we sufficiently consider how much our personal religion is endangered, from the very circumstance of religion being our profession. In going through the duties, putting on the appearances, speaking the language, and exhibiting the feelings of religion, what care, what watchfulness, what tenderness of heart, what prayer is requisite, to preserve the spirit of religion. Have none of us cause to complain, "they made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." We may minister

grace to our hearers, and yet not to ourselves. Spirituality of doctrine is not always connected with spirituality of heart and conduct. The best of us are far more spiritual in our pulpits, than in our closets, and find it more easy to preach against all the sins of our people, than to mortify one in our own hearts. This difficulty springs out of the peculiar self-deception connected with our employment. We are apt to forget the Christian in the minister. We study the Bible more as ministers than as Christians, more to find matter for the instruction of our people, than food for the nourishment of our souls; and thus we are in danger of becoming mere formalists in our profession." It has been well remarked, that "when once a man begins to view religion, not as of personal, but of professional importance, he has an obstacle in his course with which private Christians are unacquainted." Henry Martyn seems to have been tenderly conscious of this temptation. "Every time I open the scriptures," he says, "my thoughts are about a sermon or exposition, so that in private I seem to be reading in public." At a later period, also, he observes, "I see how great are the temptations of a missionary to forget his own soul. Apparently and outwardly employed for God, my heart has been growing more hard and proud. Let me be taught that the first great business of earth, is the sanctification of my own soul, so shall I be rendered more capable also of performing the duties of the ministry in a holy and solemn manner." Mr. Martyn's has been the experience of thousands. It is plain that we cannot live by feeding others, or heal ourselves by the mere employment of healing our people. In such a course of official service our familiarity with death and eternity, may be like that of the grave digger, the physician, and the soldier. We all know to what utter insensibility some of these are brought by their familiarity with scenes of sickness, of blood, of pain, and of death. But while we are thus fearful of neglecting

our own souls in the round of duties which belong to the ministerial profession, we must never omit any of them, or fail to perform them with zeal and diligence, for that would hinder our own improvement. A twofold object is to be sought for in the cultivation of personal holiness, viz: our own present peace and future salvation, and increased usefulness with others.

TWO METHODS OF PROMOTING HOLINESS RECOMMENDED.

Two things I would recommend as excellent helps to this duty of cultivating personal holiness for your own security, and for the welfare of others. The first is, the method adopted by the pious Cotton Mather, in the preparation of his sermons, which was, to stop at the end of every division of the discourse, and endeavor by prayer and self-examination, to fix upon his heart some holy impression of the subject. Thus the seven hours that he usually gave to his sermon, proved so many hours of devotion to his own soul, and a most effective means of infusing life, warmth, and spirituality into his compositions. By such a course we should never preach a sermon to our people, in which we had not previously found a blessing to ourselves.

The second is the devotional reading of the lives of eminently pious persons, especially ministers of the Gospel. The account which Bishop Burnet gives of the influence of Archbishop Leighton's character, on himself, is much to our purpose. In the close of his treatise on the Pastoral Care, he says, "I have laid together with great simplicity what has been the subject of my thoughts for above thirty years. I was formed to them by a bishop that had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal; that had the greatest parts, as well as virtues, with the perfectest humility I ever saw in man, and had a sublime

strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty of thought, and language, and pronounciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached, and have seen whole assemblies melt into tears before him; and of whom I can say with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him, for above two and twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word that had not a direct tendency to edification, and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I wished to be in, in the last moments of my life." If we cannot have such a man ever with us, it is good to have the remembrance of him. If the original be gone, it is good to look at the picture, and try to copy after it. Examples are set before us in scripture, "whose faith we should follow, considering the end of their conversation, even Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is our great example, we must follow others, only as they follow him. To have the mind that was in Christ, to be willing to spend and be spent for his sake, in order to the salvation of souls; this is the perfection of the Christian ministry. I cannot conclude this lecture without earnestly recommending to you all, if it be possible, to obtain and study much the excellent work of the present Bishop of Winchester, on the "Ministerial Character of Christ." In it is most carefully set forth every thing in the life and ministry of Christ, which should be to us an example. I know of no work on the ministry more worthy of republication in our country than this, and hope that it will not be passed by.

LECTURE II.

HOLINESS THE CHIEF REQUISITE IN A MINISTER.

No apology is needed for continuing to speak somewhat longer on a subject so deeply important as that of ministerial piety. If this be wanting, though we have all faith, and the gift of tongues, and miracles, and the eloquence of angels, and may answer some purpose in the Church, it may only be as that of the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal in the service of the Jewish temple. All our gifts shall profit us nothing, but on the great day when judgment shall begin at the house of God, and not merely our works, but ourselves tried as by fire, our Lord will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." One of the fathers, when treating of the awful account to be required of ministers, says of one of those fearful passages in God's word concerning them, that when he read it, it came like a loud peal of thunder over his soul, and made him exclaim, "O God, if this be so, which of thy ministers can be saved? Why should I ever have dared to enter on so dangerous an office?" Another

declares, that God leads his ministers blind-fold into their work, not showing them the half of its trials and difficulties, until they have entered upon it, and then only gradually—giving them grace according to each day's need. How important then to begin aright, with singleness of heart, with an experimental knowledge of religion, having counted the cost, and being willing to bear it.

HUMILITY AN IMPORTANT PART OF MINISTERIAL HOLINESS.

I mentioned in my last some things which contributed to self-deception, as to our own personal piety. I would now mention another against which we cannot be too carefully guarded. It is the adoption of the flattering opinion of others as to our personal piety, in place of that humble opinion which God gave us by his word and spirit on our first conversion, and which we still had, perhaps, on our first entrance upon duty. We were then clothed with humility, and really thought with the apostle, that we were not only the least of all saints, but of sinners the chief. Gradually, however, the kind and flattering praises of men—sometimes of good Christians—like the continual dropping of water, produces an effect. Some there are so simple hearted as to suppose, that we of the ministry really must be, not only all that we seem to be, but all that in our sermons we exhort others to be; that the ministerial life must almost insure a high degree of holiness; that in ministers the gods have come down in the likeness of men, and that in entertaining them, they are at least entertaining angels. Therefore, they speak to them accordingly, and unfortunately the ministers sometimes come by little and little, to receive such language too favorably. Others there are who use much the same language in speaking to ministers, out of a courteous flattering disposition, or because they hear others speak thus, and see that it is gratifying, and will secure favor. These latter do

not, however, really think so in their hearts, nor do they always speak thus of them, but often very differently. Therefore it is, that a minister's worst enemies sometimes speak more truly of him, than his kindest friends and most cautious acquaintances do to him; and in this respect, as in others, he has often need to pray, that he may be saved from his friends, rather than from his enemies. The vanity and self-righteousness of our own hearts is always inclining us to believe more and more of the flattering words of these weak friends, until at length we have almost parted with our first humble but true estimate of our personal piety.

In proportion as we cultivate that important branch of holiness, deep humility, we shall indeed be not only dissatisfied, but disgusted with all such adulation, and shall rather pursue that course of honest duty, which instead of making us what one has not unhappily called "the world's saints," will sometimes bring censure on us. This sentiment is very well expressed in a few Latin words of the late Bishop Burgess, of England, which were given by a young relative of his. "*Memento mori. Disce mori. Consuesce mori, cum Paulo, qui dixit, Morior quotidie. Memento tibi non placere, tibi displicere, tibi ut alii displiceant, velle, non ament, contemnant, adversentur, odiant. Modo ut amet Deus, et faciat, ut umnia tibi cooperentur in bonum.*"

CONSIDERATIONS AND TESTIMONIES IN BEHALF OF MINISTERIAL HOLINESS.

Having thus warned you against another snare to personal piety, let me add some considerations and testimonies in behalf of its great necessity, in order to success in the ministry. And as my object in these lectures should be your benefit, not my reputation, as I claim no credit for originality, but only wish you to know those things which the wisdom and experience of others declare to be most important, I shall adduce

freely, not only the sentiments of able and pious men, but oftentimes their very words, in preference to anything of my own. Bishop Taylor, from whom I quoted in my first lecture, says, in his usual quaint, but impressive manner, "Ministers must not only be blameless, but didactic in their lives; that as by their sermons they preach in season, by their lives they may preach out of season, that is, at all seasons, and to all men, that men seeing their good works may glorify God." It is an happy thought this, that we may be always preaching. To spend from half an hour to an hour, two or three times a week, in preaching the blessed Gospel, is considered a glorious privilege. Some feel as if they would wish to be always in the pulpit, always declaring the glad tidings; but as that cannot be, how pleasing is the thought that we may be continually preaching by our lives, or rather applying the Gospel by our lives, the application being the most interesting and important part of the sermon. As to the efficacy of an holy life, let me mention something that is related of the missionary Elliott. He resolved, we are told, "that he would leave something of God, and heaven, and religion, wherever he went." He was one that walked with God. Of him it was said, as of Origen, "*Quemadmodum docet, sic vixit; quemadmodum vixit sic docet.*" "Such an habitual ministry," says one, "spreading the atmosphere of heaven over the ordinary employments of life, proves the stamp of a divine impression, and is the manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God. It is the picture of the angel standing in the sun, an undoubted representation of the Divine Majesty." The mention of Origen, reminds us of a passage in his life, which, while it exhibits the utter unlawfulness of the irreligious engaging in the ministry, yet shows that a pious man, may fall and rise again, and be truly penitent. He fell so far as to join in sacrificing to idols, and was on that account excommunicated. On a certain occa-

sion afterwards, being at Jerusalem, and constrained to preach, he opened the Bible at the Psalm, "Unto the wicked, saith God, why dost thou preach my law." So affected was he at the remembrance of his sin, that he closed the book with tears, and melted the whole congregation with sympathy for his sorrow.

On the subject of the influence of a holy life on our preaching, and the efficacy of that preaching, you will remember that I quoted the saying of Quintillian, that an orator ought to be a good man. A good man in the Christian Church is, of course, a much higher character than one in the heathen world, for he is one who is partaker of the divine nature, and is endued with wisdom from above. The Christian minister, therefore, must be experimentally acquainted with what he teaches others. I adduce a few testimonies on this point. In reply to one who inquired what was the best method he could adopt for making a rapid progress in Christian eloquence, an old writer said, "Your progress in that will be in proportion to the intensity of your love to Christ." Love is always eloquent. Love to Christ being the highest and holiest emotion of the human heart, and awakening the most tender compassion for the lost ones whom he came to save, should be cultivated as the source of true oratory. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." There we have the true source of the eloquence of love. The pious Brainerd, on his death-bed said of this heartfelt piety, "when ministers feel these gracious influences on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men, and as it were, to handle them with their hands, whereas without them, whatever reason or oratory we may use, we do but make use of stumps instead of hands." Legh Richmond also has left a similar testimony. "I always find that when I speak from the inward feelings of my heart with respect to

the works of inbred corruption, earnest desire after salvation, a sense of my own nothingness, and my Saviour's fulness, the people hear, feel, are edified and strengthened. Whereas, if I descend to mere formal or cold explanation of particulars, which do not affect the great question, 'what must I do to be saved,' my hearers and I grow dull and languid together, and no good is done." Let me now quote more largely from a work on the ministry, which for its awakening tendency, is unequalled by any in our language—I mean Baxter's Reformed Pastor. "Take heed to yourselves," he says, "lest you be strangers to the effectual working of that Gospel which you preach, and lest while you proclaim to the world the necessity of a Saviour, your own hearts should neglect him, and you miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits. Be that first yourselves, which you persuade your hearers to be. Heartily entertain that Christ and Spirit which you offer to them. It is possible, though an unusual thing, that preaching may succeed to the salvation of others without the holiness of your own hearts and lives; but it is impossible that it should save your own souls. Though it be promised to them that turn many to righteousness, that they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven, it is on the supposition that they are first turned to it themselves. An holy calling will not save an unholy man. Many a preacher is in hell, who called upon his hearers an hundred times to use their utmost diligence to avoid that place of torment. Many at that day shall say, "Lord have we not prophesied in thy name," who shall be answered, "I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity." What can be more wretched, than that man, who made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and help others to obtain it, and yet is excluded from it himself. What can you devise to say to your hearers, but for the most part, it will be against your own souls. If you mention hell, you mention your own

inheritance. If you describe heaven, you describe your own misery, in having no right to it. O wretched life, that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self condemning. A graceless inexperienced minister, is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth. Hard studies, much knowledge, excellent preaching, he adds, are but the more hypocritical sinning. It is a most palpable error, he says, in those ministers who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will study hard to preach accurately, and study little or none to live accurately. They are loth to misplace a word in their sermons, but make nothing of misplacing their affections, words, actions, in their lives.

Remember, he says, that many eyes are upon you, and will observe your falls. The eclipses of the sun by day-time are seldom without many witnesses. If other men can sin without great observation, you cannot. While you are as lights set on a hill, you cannot be hid. Your sins also are attended with more aggravation than those of other men. It was the saying of King Alphonsus, "that a great man cannot commit a small sin." We may with more propriety say, that a sin committed by one of God's ministers is great, which would be considered small in another person. The sin of Eli's sons was great before the Lord, because it made others abhor the offering of the Lord, and caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Again, he says, "The success of all your labors depends very much on your own conduct. If you unsay by your lives what you say by your lips, you will prove the greatest hindrances of your own work." Again, "It greatly prevents our success if other men by their lives are all the week contradicting to the people what we have been speaking from God's Word on the Sabbath, but it will prevent it much more, if we contradict it ourselves, and our actions give our words the lie. One improper word, one

unbecomming action, may blast the fruit of many a sermon with some persons. Therefore, preach to yourselves the sermons you study, before you preach them to others. If you were to do this for your own sakes, it would be no lost labor; but I principally recommend it on the public account and for the sake of the Church. When your minds are in an holy frame, your people are likely to partake of it. They are likely to feel it when you have been much with God. That which is most in your hearts will be most in their ears. And I have often observed it in the best of my hearers, that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold accordingly. You cannot decline and neglect your duty, but others will be losers as well as yourselves." To prevent coldness in preaching, he recommends that a minister take some special pains with his heart, just before he goes to the congregation; for if he be cold, then how can he warm the hearts of his hearers. Read some rousing awakening book, or meditate upon the subject on which you are about to preach, and on the great value of the people's souls, that thus you may "go in the zeal of the Lord into His house."

But, after every art of this kind in order to stimulate zeal, I do not say that you will be always what you ought to be. Even Baxter himself, thus complains. "For my own part I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself, that I deal not with my own soul, and those of others, as one that looks for the great day of the Lord. I wonder that I can have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly engross my attention. I wonder how I can preach of them so coldly and slightly. I must own I seldom come out of the pulpit but my conscience smites me that I have not been more serious and fervent. How couldst thou speak of heaven and hell, of life and death, with so little emotion? Dost thou believe that this people have so much sin upon them, and so much misery

before them, and art thou no more affected with their situation? Such is the peal which conscience rings in my ears, and yet is my soul not sufficiently awakened. Save me, O God, from such hardness of heart." It is bad enough when with this faithful man we have thus to mourn over a want of tender sensibility. What then must be the case of those who have none? It is a melancholy fact, that sometimes none is less affected by the truths of the Gospel, than the very man who preaches them. Like those who sounded the horns before the the city of Jericho, he may strike terror into others, while he himself is free from all apprehension and concern.

TWO SKETCHES OF THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER.

As I concluded my first lecture on this subject with an allusion to a lovely specimen of ministerial character in the person of Archbishop Leighton, so I will end this by a sketch of the character of Bishop Benson, and the outline of a faithful pastor by Bishop Ken. "The piety of Bishop Benson," says his biographer, "though awfully strict, was inexpressibly amiable. It diffused such a sweetness through his temper, and such benevolence over his countenance, as none who knew him can ever forget. He looked upon all that the world calls important, its pleasures, its riches, and its various competitions, with a playful and a good natured kind of contempt, and could make persons ashamed of their folly by a raillery that never gave pain to any human being. Of vice he always spoke with severity and detestation, but looked on the vicious with the tenderness of a pitying angel. Wherever he went he carried cheerfulness and improvement along with him." The following is a part of the portrait of a faithful pastor, by Bishop Ken.

"Give me the Priest these graces shall possess ;
Of an ambassador, a just address ;

A father's tenderness, a shepherd's care ;
A leader's courage who the cross can bear ;
A ruler's awe, a watchman's wakeful eye ;
A pilot's skill, the helm in storms to ply ;
A fisher's patience, and a laborer's toil ;
A guide's detxerity to disembroil ;
A prophet's inspiration from above ;
A teacher's knowledge, and a Saviour's love ;
Of virtue uniform, and cheerful air ;
Fix'd meditation, and incessant prayer ;
Affections mortified, well guided zeal ;
Of saving truth the relish wont to feel ;
From wilful sin, though not from frailty free ;
Who still keeps Jesus in his heart and head ;
Who strives in steps of our High Priest to tread ;
Who can himself and all the world deny ;
Lives pilgrim here, though denizen on high."

LECTURE III.

ON A ZEALOUS AFFECTION FOR THE MINISTERIAL
OFFICE, AND A DILIGENT PERFORMANCE OF ITS
DUTIES.

HAVING considered the first and most indispensable qualification for the minister, viz: a genuine personal piety, we proceed to remark that this alone is quite insufficient for the work. Though all true Christians belong to that royal priesthood which is anointed by the Spirit to show forth the praises of God, and promote the kingdom of Christ on earth, yet all are not called to labor in word and doctrine, and to give themselves up to the work of the ministry. We must be called of God. We must be moved by the Holy Ghost in our hearts to this work. It must be our heart's desire to engage in it, so as to feel that necessity is laid upon us, yea, a woe awaiting us if we preach not the Gospel. There must be a peculiar affection for this mode of doing good, this way of showing our gratitude to Christ for his redemption of us, and our compassion for the souls of others. It has been justly said that in order not merely to our comfort, but to our great success in any art or profession, we must have not merely a

taste for it, but a passionate attachment to it, so as to pursue the same, not for the profit only, but for the love of it. Emphatically is this the case with the ministry, far more than with any other. Dull and irksome must be the discharge of its duties without a heartfelt delight in the same ; love alone can render its labors pleasant and easy. A man, however sincere in his personal religion, who enters the ministry devoid of this, is like a man who without a sympathetic attachment enters into the conjugal relation. He may exercise his judgment aright in the matter, and make a prudent choice. The woman to whom he is married, may be sensible, pious, discreet, so that he cannot but esteem her, and he may be worthy of her, and treat her with all duty and respect, and thus be esteemed a good husband, but if there be no congeniality of character, no sympathy of soul, if he does not tenderly love her, he cannot be truly happy in the relation. So it is with one choosing as his profession the service of God in the sanctuary, without that heartfelt love of its peculiar employments which will always make him do rather more than is required, than less. An husband who tenderly loves his wife, is always trying to promote her welfare, is anxious for opportunities of evincing his affection, and manifests it in a thousand little ways. It is his happiness thus to act. So it is with him who loves the ministerial office. It is good to him to be zealously affected in so good a thing. He loves to be instant in season and out of season. He acts not by constraint, but willingly ; gladly spending and being spent ; willing even to impart his very soul, that is, to lay down his life, if need be, for the souls whom Christ redeemed. Such is the zealous love he bears to the work of the ministry. The affectionate husband who loves his wife, loves himself, for they twain are one. The true-hearted minister and his work are one. In proportion as this affection is in the heart, it will be easy to put forth all needful diligence in the execution

of our office. But we must not suppose that it is unnecessary to stir up this gift of God, that it will certainly, without any encouragement and provocation, do every thing that can be done. The many exhortations to laborious zeal, and the warnings against slothfulness which God in his word addresses to ministers, prove that we must be ever reminding ourselves of the duty of being given up wholly to these things, in order to make full trial of our ministry. The example of our Lord in making constant employment his meat and drink, and of the apostles in laboring day and night if by any means they might save some, should ever be before our eyes and hearts. We should remember how fearfully our Lord has connected together two words, not always associated as they should be in the minds and language of men, the words wicked and slothful. "Thou wicked and slothful servant," said He to him who hid his talent in the earth; and what an end was assigned him. How contemptuously, also, the prophet is made to speak of idlers of his day, comparing them to dumb dogs—sleeping—lying down—loving to slumber.

Our Church, faithful to the duty she owes to the Divine Head, not only appoints a long previous preparation of study, in order that her ministers may be scribes well instructed and wise to win souls, workmen well furnished for every good work, of whom she need not be ashamed, but at the solemn hour of ordination, requires a most emphatic promise of "*all diligence, all faithful diligence,*" in every department of duty—in prayers—in reading—in every pastoral office—so that as much as in them lieth, by drawing all their cares and studies that way, they may save the souls committed to them.

And this will not seem an hard task to those who enter with a right spirit upon the ministry. Those who re-built the walls of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah, surprised every one by the rapidity with which it was done, though in the midst of many difficulties. They worked with a

trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. But Nehemiah tells us the secret of it, "they had a mind to the work." They considered it as a great work, and would not leave it to come down to any inferior business. It is of very great importance indeed, that young ministers should set out with right views on this subject, having a fixed and deep impression on their minds, that while "in all labor there is profit," in this above all we may expect great profit. There is not a more fixed law of our nature, I mean, a more sure appointment of God, than that persevering diligence shall be attended with success, yea, oftentimes in things that are evil as well as good. "Seest thou a man," said Solomon, "who is diligent in business, he shall not stand before mean men, he shall stand before kings;" that is, be honored by them. That the hand of the diligent maketh rich, is another saying continually fulfilled before our eyes. It is so as to all arts, sciences, pursuits and aims. What is there within the reach of man, that persevering diligence, under the direction of a sound judgment, cannot attain to? I remember a sentiment to this effect, delivered by Dr. Smith, one of the Presidents of Princeton College, to the senior class, of which I was a member, when it was about to graduate. "Young gentlemen," he said, "the world is before you; your future position in it is very much in your own hands. You may be, by that connection which God has established between effort and success, almost anything you please. Fix your minds now on any station, no matter how high, on any attainment, however great, on any fortune, however large; and from this time keep it in view, diligently and judiciously direct all your efforts and studies that way, and if your lives be spared, you will scarce fail of your object." Now, if this be so in regard to the poor, perishing, and often injurious things of time and sense, selfishly, ambitiously, covetously pursued, how much more may we expect the blessing of God, when we are seek-

ing to do good to others, according to his own command. Are not his promises most abundant to those who are diligent in this pursuit? "Take heed to thyself, and the doctrine, continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and those who hear thee." Can any thing be clearer, more express, more full? Must there not be something very defective in the ministers, if great results do not flow from their example and doctrine? "The Lord help man," said Dr. Owen, "for either the Gospel is not true, or else there are few who in due manner discharge that ministry which they took upon them."

I do not say that there shall always be such a visible success in the conversion of great numbers, and the building up of churches, as we may desire and expect, but only that good will be done in such manner as God shall direct. The labors, prayers and example of faithful ministers, shall tell sooner or later, in one way or other, on the great work. The visible success of our Lord himself in making converts, was not indeed so great as that of some of the apostles, but the time was not come for that. He was laying the great foundation, he was sowing the seed and planting the trees, and others entered into his labors. So it has been with some of God's faithful and laborious ministers. For a time, perhaps a long time, they did not see as much fruit from their labors as some others, but still the fruit did come, sometimes late in life, sometimes after their death. One thing is certain, that good will come. Now, one of the most encouraging of all incentives to exertion, is the certainty of success. "To be assured of victory beforehand, is enough," said one, "to make even the coward brave." This certainty and assurance we have from God himself, but then, only on certain conditions, the conditions of zeal, diligence, fidelity, which are easy and blessed terms to those who have a mind to work. God will not be served with what costs us nothing, and therefore we

find, that while the sluggard of the sanctuary only "wisheth, and hath nothing," the diligent man has many souls for his hire.

DILIGENCE IN STUDY.

This diligence must be seen in all parts of our calling, and especially in the previous studies and preparation for the pulpit, whence our people expect to be fed with knowledge and truth. It must never be said,

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

Let me warn you against one great weakness, we must say sin, into which some fall, who relying on their talents, put off their preparation until they leave not time enough to do it justice. There are those who make a boast of this, and in order to magnify their genius, speak of only beginning their preparation on Saturday morning, perhaps evening, perhaps, indeed, they may say, that Sunday morning finds the sermon only half done. Sometimes, perhaps, this is not exactly true, and their indolence is magnified to magnify their genius. But when it is true, they ought rather to be ashamed of it, and not glory in their shame. To put off preparation without good cause until Saturday night, thus encroaching on the rest which should prepare for the Sabbath, or to the Sabbath itself, is an unwarranted violation of the Sabbath, and interferes with the more perfect performance of the duties of the sanctuary, which require all the freshness of the soul and body for their right discharge.

For the most part, however, it will be found that those who depend on genius without study, those who have spent little or no time in the preparation, will verify in their sermons the old maxim of the philosophers, "*Ex nihilo, nihil fit*;" what costs them nothing is worth nothing to their hearers, being frothy and superficial—*verbum et nil amplius*. The pulpit efforts of such will be like,

“ Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing out.”

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in addressing young men on another subject, says, “Have no dependence on your own genius. Nothing is denied to well directed labor, nothing to be obtained without it. Impetuosity and impatience of regular labor is the reason why many students disappoint expectation, and being more than boys at sixteen, they become less than men at thirty.” It is thus that many young ministers fall off from the very time they enter the pulpit. Dr. Miller, of Princeton, says, “I have directed close attention to this subject since my connection with the seminary, and the result, without one solitary exception is, that I never knew an individual gain any considerable mass of really digested and valuable knowledge, without unwearied industry.” As, in regard to food for our bodies, it is the law of God that by the sweat of our brow we eat bread, so it is with our minds. Some minds require more labor, they being less quick to apprehend, and less tenacious to retain knowledge. Such must remember the counsel of an old student, “*Lege Lege, aliquid hærebit.*” It must be with them as with the painter, “*Nulla dies sine linea.*” “*Nec mora, nec requies,*” must be their motto. These rules faithfully observed, the diligence of such will carry them far beyond those who at first outstripped them. Of course I am not now speaking of mere human learning, or even of mere controversial divinity—the metaphysics of theology—but chiefly of that knowledge whereby we ourselves become wise unto salvation, and help to make others so. Walton, in his life of Dr. Donne, says, that after he had been constrained by a necessity laid upon him to enter the ministry, “all his studies, which had been occasionally diffused, were centred in divinity. Now he had a new calling, new thoughts, and a new employment for his wit and eloquence. Now all his earthly affections were changed

into a divine love, and all the faculties of his soul were engaged in the conversion of others." Mr. Bickersteth, also, in his *Christian Hearer*, says—"How few read enough to stock their minds. The mind is no widow's cruse, which fills with knowledge as fast as we empty it. Why should a clergyman labor less than a barrister, since in spiritual things, as well as temporal, it is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich? Does the conscience never whisper on any topic of theology, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?"

EXAMPLES OF DILIGENCE IN THE USE OF TIME.

It is a good thing to encourage ourselves to diligence; to recollect what has been done in the way of study, writing, and preaching, by those who have gone before us. Take the three cases of Baxter, Payson, and Bedell; three men of the feeblest constitution, hanging for years between life and death; and yet how manifold their labors in the study, in the pulpit, in the families of their charges. But then, they lost no time. They were always doing something. They acted on the plan of Wesley, of whom it was said, "He was always in haste, but never in a hurry." They knew how to employ the little parentheses of time. They practised on the precepts of some old writers, of whom one said, "Abhor an hour of idleness, as you would one of drunkenness." Another, "Give me a Christian who counts his time more precious than gold." Another said of one who had needlessly prolonged his visit, "I would rather have given this man an handful of money, than have been kept thus long out of my study."

In order not to lose time ourselves, and not to take time from others, punctuality is very important. It is recorded of Melancthon, that when he made an appointment, he not only fixed the hour but the minute. This, it is true, is generally done now, but how seldom is it punctually observed. Our

own Bishop White, who was one of the most studious and well-read divines in our land, and at the same time engaged in more public institutions than perhaps any man in America, was very conscientious and exact upon this subject, never tarrying behind a single moment. His temper, which was the very best, was more tried by the negligence of others in this respect than by anything else. He used to say that it was nothing else than stealing, thus to take a man's time from him. I was present once on a public occasion when he failed to come at the appointed moment, and witnessed the surprise and uneasiness awakened in those who knew his conscientious and habitual punctuality. In a little time one or two of his friends went in pursuit of him, and soon he was seen, old as he was, out of breath and distressed, hastening to the place of meeting. His watch had stopped a short time before the appointed moment, and this had caused the mistake. Concerning this entire devotion of all our time and energies to the work of the ministry, Mr. Scott, amongst other excellent remarks on that passage in St. Paul's epistle to Timothy, "Give thyself wholly to them," says, I remember Demosthenes somewhere uses the same, or an entirely similar expression concerning himself and his application to public affairs. He was always the statesman. His time, his talents, his heart, his all, were swallowed up as it were in this one object. And in fact no man can become very eminent in any line when this is not the plan. It is noted, he says, by some writer concerning Bonaparte, that he never went to any town, or city, or country, which was new to him, but immediately he was examining and considering where would be the best place for a castle or camp, for an ambushment or an attack, for the means of defence or annoyance. He thus, in his line, entered into the spirit of the clause, "*en toutois esthi*," always the general. Our Lord says of himself, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." His

whole time and soul were engaged in it. The apostles say, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word;" we will not suffer even things good in themselves, as serving tables, to take us off from these good and essential employments. They entered into the very spirit of this clause, "Give thyself wholly to them."

SELF-DENIAL NECESSARY.

In order to this, we must have the self-denying spirit of our Lord, the apostles, the martyrs, confessors, and missionaries of every age. Our Lord pleased not himself. Though rich he became poor—had not whereon to lay his head—but still went about doing good. In order to be in the best possible state for rendering the greatest amount of service, we should remember the words of St. Paul, "he that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." The candidate for the prizes at the Olympic games eat, drank, slept, clothed, and exercised himself, so as to be in the best possible condition for running, wrestling, or any other game in which he sought the crown. No useless flesh, no needless clothing was on him. He was all bone, and sinew, and solid substance. So do we even with the horse for the race. His food is chosen, measured, weighed. His flesh is hardened, his limbs rubbed and exercised, so that he may have the greatest strength and agility for the course. Such should be the discipline of both body and mind for the work of the ministry. Our food, sleep, exercise, recreation, as well as study, should be all such as may fit us for our Master's service. "I sit down to table," said the good Joseph Alleine, "not to pamper my body, but to nourish a servant of the Lord, and fit him for his master's service." A due attention to the effect of what we eat and drink on mind and body, both as regards quantity and quality, and a regulation of our diet accordingly, would greatly help to produce the most entire meetness for duty."

The same rule should be observed as to all other indulgences of body and soul ; which should be so regulated as to make us most fit for the work of the ministry. Mr. Cumberland, one of England's best scholars, has given an advice, the result of his own experience, not unworthy of your consideration and trial. He used often to test his temperance at the different meals by repairing to his study immediately after them and resuming his book or composition, and if he found that his mind and body were not both in good order for the same, he concluded that he had not used his food in the proper manner. How much better this, than a resort to the pipe, the cigar, the wine glass, or even the sofa, as a relief from undue indulgence at the table.

If in all our exercises, enjoyments and discipline, both of body and mind, we had a single eye to God's glory, and our greatest usefulness, how much more might we accomplish in the ministry.

LECTURE IV.

ON PREACHING.

HAVING considered the necessity of holiness in the ministry, and then of our great zeal and diligence in all the duties of the sacred office, I proceed to speak of the minister of religion as a preacher of the word, a dispenser of the sacraments, and a pastor to the people.

In spite of the long and great neglect of preaching in the Roman Church, and of the slighting manner in which some others have of late years spoken of it, I hesitate not to begin with this instrument of good as the first and chief in the order of God's appointment, and the experience of his church. I should not speak thus decidedly, had I not God's word most plainly in its favor. We read of this institution in the eleventh chapter of the book of Numbers, where seventy elders were appointed to take part with Moses in prophesying, that is, preaching the law or word of God to the people. Traces of it may be seen during the reign of the kings. After the captivity, it was revived, as we may see in Nehemiah, and used much as it is now. Raised on a pulpit of wood, the preacher read the word of God and gave the sense thereof.

Our Lord himself declares, that according to ancient prophecy, he was anointed to preach the glad tidings of great joy, that is, the Gospel. He also ordained apostles and elders to the same.

PROMINENCE GIVEN TO IT BY OUR LORD, THE APOSTLES, THE
FATHERS AND REFORMERS.

Let us see what is the prominence given to it. The first words which Jesus spake to the twelve on sending them forth the first time, were, "Go, Preach." After his resurrection it was the same, "Go ye, preach the Gospel to every creature." St. Paul says, that Christ sent him to preach the Gospel—that the word of reconciliation was committed to himself and companions. He declares, "that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," asking, "how shall they hear without a preacher?" Accordingly ministers are exhorted to labor in word and doctrine—to preach the word—by sound doctrine to convince gainsayers—to feed the flock of God—to warn the wicked from his evil way by preaching faithfully that law which is perfect, converting the soul. All this is agreeable to God's design as set forth in the last prayer of our Lord. "Oh, Father, sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." Accordingly we find soon after our Lord's ascension, when the Holy Ghost was sent down with great power, three thousand souls were converted under one sermon of Peter's; and all the inspired writers of the New Testament speak of converts as being "born again of the word of God." St. Paul speaks of his converts as those whom "he had begotten again by the Gospel," the Spirit being the quickening principle or agent.

It is an undoubted fact, that our Lord and His immediate followers set an example of the most abundant use of this instrument of conversion and edification. Who have ever equalled them? By day and night—on the Sabbath—during

the week—in the temple—in the synagogue—from house to house—in the market-place—in the wilderness—by land—by sea—to saint—to sinner—to Jew—to Gentile—they were ever preaching—crying aloud, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear. Those who came after them, the great army of preachers who went forth through all the world, and their successors in all the Churches, did the same. There is no fact in ecclesiastical history better attested—never indeed denied—that for some centuries great use was made of preaching. Different portions of the word were read, and in the larger churches several of the clergy, bishops, priests, and deacons, would rise up in succession, and give the sense thereof, and exhort to the obedience of the faith. The elevation on which the bishop sat, was called “the throne of preaching.” Nor was this discontinued until it became good policy in the Romish Church to hide the word from the people, and merely to deal out to them a few select portions of Scripture, amusing them with the lying legends of the saints, instead of the faithful exhibition of Gospel truth.

It is not wonderful that they should have so dreaded the introduction of this practice, and so labored to prevent it at the Reformation, or that the Reformers should so resolutely have persisted in the same. It was the very life and soul of the Reformation. Luther, trumpet-tongued, sounded aloud the glorious Gospel, and shook the throne of antichrist to its very foundation. The Reformers on the Continent and in England followed his example. To silence them was tried, but in vain, for they said, woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel. It may also be confidently affirmed, that ever since then, the prosperity of religion in any church has been in due proportion to the fidelity and zeal with which this ordinance of God has been tried. The preaching of the Gospel according to truth, is as infallible a measure of the purity of the Church, as can be found. An unholy people

cannot live under the continual sound of a faithful ministry. So deeply impressed were our Reformers with the importance of it, that when it was impossible to supply the churches with men capable of preaching, they set forth a book of homilies to be read by them to the people, and which were of great service to the cause of truth then, as they are to this day. I will only adduce the testimonies of two of our English divines on this subject, out of the many who might be quoted, and who only speak the sentiments, and set forth the conduct of the Church in every age, except those of darkness and corruption. Mr. Thorndike, a writer of eminence, justly remarks, "That preaching, in respect of personal performance, is the most excellent work bishops and presbyters are able to do in the service of God." Mr. Hooker, our great authority in Church matters, says, "So worthy a part of divine service we should greatly wrong, if we did not regard preaching as the ordinance of God—sermons as the keys to the kingdom of heaven—as wings to the soul—as spurs to the good affections of men—unto the sound and healthy as food—as physic unto diseased minds." I quote from these because they are favorite authors with a modern school, which is much disposed to disparage preaching.

DUE PREPARATION FOR IT.

Such being the high rank which preaching holds amongst the instruments of grace, it becomes those who are appointed to use it, to see that they be duly qualified. It should be used skilfully, faithfully, with the greatest ability, and the fullest preparation which can be brought to bear on it. "The preacher should choose out acceptable words"—should "be wise to win souls"—be "able rightly to divide the word of truth"—be "well instructed unto the kingdom." He should know how to use the word as "the hammer of the Lord," to break the heart of stone to pieces—as "the sword of the

Spirit," to pierce it through with convictions of sin—as "the fire of the Lord," to purify its corruption. The art of preaching then is worthy to be studied. It is certain that some attain to much greater perfection than others, and produce much greater effect. This is what we are now about to consider.

A DEEP SENSE OF RELIGION NECESSARY.

Although I have already spoken of the importance of personal piety to the general success of the ministry, I should fail of my duty if I did not refer to its special efficacy in this department.

The ancient poets and historians called upon their muses and good geniuses to inspire them while they wrote, but we have the Spirit of the true God to assist us in our work, if we will in sincerity and truth call for it. The Spirit has never left the earth since it first brooded over the waters of the great deep, but a larger dispensation has been granted to the Christian Church, to enlighten the mind and sanctify the heart through the word. In order to effectual preaching, the heart must be anointed from above with love to God and man. Love is always eloquent, eloquent in proportion to the subject in which it is engaged. It is said of Aristotle that, in composing one of his famous books, "he dipped his pen into his very soul." But it was much better said by one of our old divines, that if "God dropped not down his assistance, we write with a pen that hath no ink." Bishop Burnet, among other excellent advices, says, "but the rule that I have reserved to the last, is the most necessary of all, and without it the rest will never do the business. It is this: A man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion; he must have a life and flame in his thoughts with relation to these subjects. He must have felt in himself those things which he intends to explain and recommend to others.

There is an authority in the simplest things that can be said, when they carry visible characters of genuineness in them. No man can preach experimentally, unless he be habitually devoted to God. Piety has been truly said to be "a flame which mortals cannot feign." They may paint it in eloquence, but a painted flame has no heat. The people attend not so much to learn doctrines, as to hear something of heaven, and to be enkindled with heavenly affections. If this be wanting they will become discouraged, and stray like hungry sheep from a barren pasture. Hence we should help them to express the sentiments of devotion by interspersing our sermons with ejaculations and thanksgivings. This was the primitive mode of preaching. The apostles could not speak long of the goodness of God without devotion. The flame kindled in their hearts, and it broke forth in powerful effusions of prayer and praise. If you will bear this in mind while reading the epistles, you will perceive what an affectionate and devotional manner there is in them, and how different from the cold, argumentative, didactic manner of too many sermonizers. A devotional application of the subject during the sermon, as well as at the conclusion, is perhaps the best method. It should seem to be throughout from the heart and to the heart, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth should always speak, especially from the pulpit.

SERMONS SHOULD BE TAKEN CHIEFLY FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

Having said thus much as to the state of the heart in order to good preaching, and a full trial of this part of our ministry, I would lay it down as a certain and most important rule, that we draw our sermons directly from the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, and that they be much in the very language of scripture. To preach the word is not merely to give the sense of it, and exhort to its acceptance, but also to declare it in the language of scripture, to read it,

or recite it to the people. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," and how can he better declare them than in the words which the Holy Ghost useth—comparing scripture with scripture—using the parables and the illustrations of the sacred writers—adducing the facts of scripture history—and all the dealings of God with man. The Bible is not a large volume in vain. God did not speak at sundry times and in divers manners for nought. All scripture is profitable in order that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished with arguments, persuasions, warnings, to suit all persons and places. The fountain is large, because so many have to draw water from it, and for so many occasions.

John Newton was walking one day by the side of a river in England, with a young minister who, having nearly exhausted his little stock of sermons with which he set out, was quite distressed to know from whence he should get more, as he had already written on all the main points in theology. Mr. Newton asked him how long that river had been flowing, and whether there was any probability of its source being dried up; bidding him not to fear that the source whence his other sermons had come should ever fail him. The Bible itself is to the pious student a never failing source of sermons. Without any other book, what materials have we in it for ministerial addresses. There have been some very plain preachers who, scarcely reading any other book, but studying this carefully, comparing one part with another, have preached much better than many learned divines.

Bishop Spratt mentions an instance of a bishop in troublous times, who, being confined nearly twenty years in the Tower of London, and plundered of his library, applied himself exclusively to the study of the scriptures as the faithful companion of his solitude, and solace of his afflictions, who left a most emphatic testimony to their sufficiency. He was often heard solemnly to profess, that "in all his studies and

various readings and observations, he had never met with a more useful guide, or a surer interpreter to direct his feet in the dark places of the living oracles, or to give satisfaction to his conscience in the experimental truths of them, than when he was driven by necessity to the assiduous cultivation of the scriptures alone, and to weigh them as it were in the balance of the sanctuary." Wisdom towards God, says Matthew Henry, "is to be gotten out of God's own book, and that by digging. Most persons do but walk on the surface of it, and pick up here and there a flower. Few dig into it, they are too lazy." As we hope for the blessing due to truth as God's instrument of conversion and sanctification, we ought then to be masters of scripture. Christ and his apostles made great use of such as were then in the sacred canon, and urged their hearers to search and prove everything thereby. When we quote scripture we speak with authority, we speak as, and what our Lord and the apostles spake. No man dare answer, for it is God who speaketh by us.

Chrysostom says, "if any thing be spoken without Scripture, the knowledge of the hearers halteth." Augustine says, "Not valet, hæc ego dico, hæc tū dicis, hæc ille dicit, *et* hæc dicit dominus." *et
sc.*

He then that has learnt the best use of scripture language in scripture truth, is the best preacher. I do not mean that it is necessary to adduce a great number of scriptures of the same meaning to prove each point, for that is tedious and unnecessary. Our Lord and the apostles quote only a few pertinent ones. But let our style, our imagery, our allusions be scriptural, and let everything be established by "thus saith the Lord." It has been admirably observed, by a living writer, "that the Bible being intimately associated in his mind, with everything dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other, and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a

religious discourse which nothing else can supply. There is no book so intelligible as the book of God, no book that connects itself so readily with religious feelings and interests, no language, whether of exposition, address, or illustration, that is therefore so generally acceptable, and enlivening as the sacred volume. Few readers of Saurin, and the French divines of his class, though orthodox in their views, forcible in their statements of scriptural truth, but have felt a lack of unction, warmth, and spiritual excitement, from the scanty infusion of the sacred dialect into their writings; a deficiency for which no power of genius or eloquence can compensate to a spiritual mind.

A passage from Bishop Burnet shall close these testimonies. "Let the preacher furnish himself, ever so well, with other things, still the reading and understanding the scriptures, chiefly the Psalms and New Testament, ought to be his chief study, until he becomes so conversant in them, that he can both say many parts of them, and explain them without book. It is the visible reason of the Jews adhering so firmly to their religion, that during the ten or twelve years of their education, their youth are much practised in their scriptures, (according to the command of God by Moses,) to weigh every word in them and get them all by heart, that it is an admiration to see how ready both men and women are among them at it. Their rabbies have it to such perfection, that they have the concordance of their whole Bibles in their memories, which gives them vast advantages when they are to argue with any that are not so ready as they are in the scriptures. Our task is much shorter and easier, and it is a reproach to us Protestants who found our religion on the scriptures, that we know the New Testament so little." On all these accounts we would recommend as the first step after determining on a subject and text, to endeavor, by the help of a concordance, or some such work as Gaston's Collections, to bring together

a large number of such parts of scripture as really bear upon it, either in the way of history or doctrine, and make use of them. Commentaries should be used as helps to the understanding of these scriptures, and to keep us from a wrong use of them. It is on account of this close keeping to scripture, that the expository mode of preaching is so much to be esteemed and used, for we are compelled by that to deal much in scripture. It was the Jewish method, first to read scripture, and then give the sense of it. It was also a favorite method in the early Christian Church, as it still is now with both ministers and people at their weekly lectures. I trust you will all of you make it an important part of your ministerial labors. In order to encourage you to this, let me set before you the example of a most interesting portion of the clergy and laity of our mother Church, with some of whom I became acquainted on a visit to England a few years since. These persons are characterized by nothing more, than by their careful study and abundant use of sacred scripture. If you visit them in their families, you will often find parents, children, and servants, when convened for family prayer, with Bibles in their hands, each one in rotation reading a verse, and this followed by some exposition of scripture. Not only is this the case when a minister is present, but also when the head of the family acts as the priest thereof. I was present on one occasion at the morning family exercises of the Bishop of Chester, now Archbishop of Canterbury, and heard him expound a portion of scripture to his household, about twelve or fifteen in number. This I was told was his custom; and thus did he prepare for those successive expositions of different parts of scripture with which he has blessed the Church for so many years. I also heard him preach at the same time to a plain congregation in a part of Durham Cathedral, which he had separated and fitted up for the purpose. His sermon was a specimen of plain scriptural preaching. It was for the

most part written, and lay before him. In one hand however was a small Bible, to which he had frequent reference. The congregation also was well supplied with Bibles, and whenever he mentioned the chapter and verse of some scripture, and turned to the same, numbers followed his example. The rattling of leaves might be heard all over the house. The references were usually to several verses in their connexion with each other. This plan I am told is quite common with some of the clergy. Two advantages attend it: first, it leads the preacher to deal more in God's word, and the people to be more familiar with it, both drawing their theology from the fountain head. Second, it serves to make the people more attentive, as they must always be ready to turn to the place referred to. This plan may not be so suitable to pulpit eloquence, but it is better calculated to make Bible-Christians and Bible-preachers.

A friend has furnished us with the following note to this lecture :—

Examples of this high appreciation, and devout and habitual use of scripture, are found in the scripture itself, and also out of it, though *in* it they were hardly to be expected, inasmuch as the most eminent servants of God there mentioned, are introduced as vehicles rather than students of revelation. I say nothing of Joshua, or Solomon, or Daniel, or the Ethiopian, or Timothy, or others. Much less is it expedient to speak of Christ, to whom, in his human nature, the truth as well as the spirit was given without measure. I single out David for a remark or two. As the poet, appointed and inspired of God, of the universal Church, he was led, in the utterance of devotional feeling, to disclose how the truly pious are affected towards the divine word. He shows most clearly, that "the word dwelt in him richly in all wisdom." The delights of every sense are employed by him to represent in some imperfect manner, the-enjoyment which divine truth afforded him in his inmost nature. The voluptuary could not express more pleasure in his gross indulgences, than David in the spiritual exercises of scripture study. The word is represented by him, (and it is *feeling* rather than *doctrine* he is expressing,) as deep and broad, as pure and holy, as perfect. It is said to impart of its perfection to others. It communicates understanding; it makes a man wiser than his teachers. It is light to the eyes, and sweetness to the taste. The possession of it is to David a continual occasion of gratitude. Seven times in a day does he bless God for it; yea, at midnight does he rise to give thanks for the support it affords him in trouble, and for its soothing and sanctifying influence at all times. These thoughts are presented by him in so many forms, that it would appear like vain repetition, if the abundance of the expressions did not manifestly spring from superabundance of delight in God's holy law;—a superabundance especially observable

when we reflect on the comparative scantiness of revelation in his day, and that while in our moral firmament the *sun* is shining, in his shone only the *stars*. In every view, the Psalms prove David to have been an eminent example of delight in the study of God's word.

Passing out of the scriptures for examples, they are found to crowd upon us on every hand. Let me name but three. *Buchanan*, the missionary, when broken down by age and labors, was employed at home in the irksome occupation of correcting the proof sheets of the Syriac Testament. To ensure perfect accuracy, he was compelled to revise every sentence and word six several times,—a labor that would be extremely revolting to most minds. Yet we are told by his biographer, that some time after, being in conversation with a friend, he was observed to be in tears. The explanation was, that they were tears of gratitude and spiritual joy at the recollection, suggested by something said in the conversation, of the pleasure he had experienced, as a reader and corrector of proof-sheets, in thus again and again revolving the sacred page ! How marvellously sweet must the word of Christ have been to Buchanan !—"sweeter than honey and the honey-comb !"

As to *Henry Martyn*, we might know from his almost matchless character as a servant, minister, and missionary of Christ, that he must have *lived*, as it were, in the Bible. From the Bible only could be drawn the principles, and imbibed the spirit, that made him what he was. But we are expressly told, that he always kept it uppermost, not only to the judgment of his reason, but also in the feelings of his heart ; and that when he found any other book which he might be reading, abating his thirst for the divine word, and his relish of its truths, he immediately laid it down, nor resumed it again, till the law of the Lord was felt to be the chief joy of his heart. Need we wonder, then, that Henry Martyn was so wise towards God, so wise for eternity, so wise to win souls ; and that he now stands so high in the judgment of the Christian world ; yea, that he shines so brightly, though for the present unseen by mortal eyes, as a star in the firmament of heaven !

To say that *Scott*, the author of the commentary, was familiar with the Bible, would seem to be a truism. His references alone, in that work, show that he must have had its contents in perfect solution in his mind. More than that, he had them in solution in his heart. He valued his knowledge of the scriptures, not merely because it was available to him as a preacher and an author, but chiefly because it was precious and important to him as a man. In proof of this let me state, that in his latter years he was occupied upon a Scripture Concordance on a new plan, and after spending much labor upon it, had to give it up on account of the growing infirmities of age. Most persons, in such case would have counted their labor lost : not so this holy man. So deep was his enjoyment of the word of Christ, even when brought before him in the uninviting way which belongs to the compilation of a concordance, that he counted his labor its own sufficient reward. It was enough for him, that his abortive work had for so long a time kept his mind in close contact and communion with the mind of the Spirit as recorded in holy writ. How plain is it that he valued the truth of Christ, not primarily as matter to be wrought up for the public, and to be spread before them from the pulpit and the press, but as the food of his own soul,—as the stay and consolation of his pilgrim spirit in its brief passage through this world ! In this matter he was like the cup-bearers of kings, tasting, only unlike them tasting largely, before he ministered to others.

LECTURE V.

PREPARATION FOR PREACHING.

LEST from some remarks in my last, any of you should infer, that the mere study of the Bible with a view to the use of its varied contents in preaching, is considered amply sufficient for the preacher, let me now proceed to urge great diligence in the study and use of other books, to which, in the providence of God, he may have access. "Give attendance to reading," was the direction of Paul to Timothy, and was doubtless intended to include other sources of knowledge from which arguments and illustrations in behalf of divine truth might be drawn. If general information was so necessary to oratory in the forum, as Cicero maintains, not less is it desirable in the pulpit. It is a neglect of the gift of God that is in us, to trifle either in the study or the pulpit. God will bless our endeavors, not our idleness. Our best thoughts and most careful studies are due to the work of the pulpit. To venture upon it with slender and imperfect furniture argues but a slight feeling of ministerial responsibility. "Admitting that some gifted ministers may preach warmly and accurately without study, yet reverence for our master's name, and a proper consideration for the solemn dignity and business of the pulpit, might well serve to repress a weak and

indigested exercise of this most important ministry. How unequal to the exigency is the gathering together of a few naked and unconnected truths, without weighing the most forcible modes of application to the consciences and varied circumstances of our people. The sustaining exercise of faith will indeed be realized in diligent preparation, but in wilful neglect, we can expect only the merited recompense of presumption.”* When suddenly called on we may, indeed, without presumption, endeavor to do our best, and expect aid from heaven, not otherwise. “I have been cured,” said Mr. Cecil, “of expecting the Holy Spirit’s influence without due preparation on our part, by observing how men preach that take up that error. We must combine Luther with Paul. “*Bene orasse, est bene studuisse,*” must be united with “give thyself wholly to these things that thy profiting may appear to all.” Well does one say, “God will curse that man’s labors who is found in the world all the week, and then on the afternoon of Saturday goes to his study; whereas, God knows, that time were little enough to pray in, and weep in, and get his heart in a fit frame for the duties of the approaching Sabbath. Such an one must soon come to the contempt which he justly merits. Unlike the wise householder, he has no treasure out of which to bring forth things new and old. The old, indeed, always comes forth, but where is the new? Nor can this barrenness of thought be justly chargeable to the resources which lie open to all ministers. There is no characteristic of scripture more striking than the constant variety of lights, in which it presents one unvarying subject.” This pleasing and useful variety of scripture was diligently studied, and successfully copied, by Bishop Jewell, of whom his biographer says, “the more eminent he was in dignity, the more diligent in the work of the ministry, not so much in frequent, as in exquisite teaching, for though his sermons

* Bridges.

were very frequent, they were always rare for the matter and manner of delivery." "How different from the sermons of some, who will not study. Except there be a gathering proportionate to the expenditure, there can be no store of knowledge laid in for themselves, and consequently, none for the people. Preachers of this stamp are known by their utter want of variety. It is substantially not only the same doctrine—which it of course ought to be—but the same sermon, with only a change of texts and some variation of method, but with scarcely the accession of a new idea."* As much variety as scripture affords, may surely be expected of the minister. In this, as in respect of doctrine, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. Our Saviour and His apostles made much use of the Old Testament, and continually enjoined it on others. The New Testament is a development of the Old, and while it explains the Old, is itself illustrated and enforced by the Old. Many parts of the New can only be understood as explanations and fulfilments of the Old, to which reference must be often had. The histories, miracles, prophecies, characters, laws, and ordinances of the Old should furnish materials to the preacher for his sermons, Christ being the end of them all. Wherefore, St. Paul, speaking of the Old Testament scriptures, says to Timothy, "they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ;" that being the key to their true understanding. But to the accurate and satisfactory knowledge of the Old Testament, other books and other learning contribute not a little. Professor Porter says: "when St. Paul writes to Timothy that a Bishop should not be a novice, there is a figurative allusion to the original word, that is very significant. Literally the expression is, '*not an infant*.' It denotes that want of knowledge or skill which we see in a new-born child, that would certainly fail of success, if set to accomplish any work

* Bridges.

requiring the strength and intelligence of a man. There is a secondary sense too that is scarcely less important. It refers to a tree or plant recently set in the earth which has not had time to become rooted, and is easily disturbed by any wind or violence. The meaning of which is, that a Christian minister ought not only to be mature in religious experience, but to have a sound, well-furnished understanding. Both these requisites he needs, lest being inflated with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. That stability of character which can resist temptation, and qualify a man to be a guide in the Church, must come from fixed religious opinions, grounded on a thorough acquaintance with divine truth. The apostle, that he might be certainly understood on this subject, often exhorts Timothy to reading, meditation, and study of the scriptures, the great store-house of divine knowledge through which the minister might become furnished for his work. Let any one read the epistles to Titus and Timothy, and then answer this plain question. Did a teacher of religion, who had the gift of inspiration to understand the scriptures—the gift of tongues to preach—a teacher too, born amidst the scenery and customs described in the Bible, and familiar with the language in which important parts of it were written—did he need the aids of study to qualify him for his work, and can a man who has not one of these advantages be qualified for the same work without study? How is he to know what is in the Bible till he has studied the Bible, and how can he study the Bible so as to have, concerning what is peculiar in its language, local allusions and images, the knowledge requisite for a public teacher, without much reading of other scriptures?" He expresses the deliberate opinion that no man who does not according to the direction of St. Paul, "give himself to reading," can be a profitable preacher to the same audience for any considerable time. He who is called to instruct others from the pulpit, must not merely *have*

been a man of reading, but he must read still while he preaches, else his sermons will be trite and barren in thought. Referring to the importance of pursuing a regular three years' course, he says, "it is equally remote from my purpose to say that every candidate, without regard to his age and other circumstances, should pursue a three years' course of study in theology. But what I mean to say is, and the time has come to say it most distinctly, that henceforward such a course of study is short enough as a general rule. If any one is providentially prevented from pursuing it, it should be submitted to as a calamity. I am the more confident of my opinion on this subject from the fact, that during twenty-five years experience in the instruction of theological students, I have heard not a few young men lament their haste in entering the ministry, but not a single individual have I heard to intimate that he had spent too much time in preparatory studies." I have myself never heard any minister, young or old, express a different sentiment.

BOOKS ON GENERAL LITERATURE TO BE STUDIED.

But beside those ecclesiastical studies of the seminary, which belong peculiarly to the ministry, and are indispensable to respectability, there are other books of general literature, and science, and history, not to be neglected by those who have time and opportunity. Julian, the apostate, endeavored to prevent Christian ministers from studying the heathen poets, historians, and mythologists, perceiving that they drew many arguments therefrom against the pagan system, and in favor of Christianity. Many things are now to be drawn from books not strictly religious, which may be applied to the service of religion. Mr. Scott, the commentator, confesses, that in earlier life he fell into error on this subject, and limited his reading too much to purely religious books; but when he enlarged the field of his investigation, it was still done to the

glory of God and the profit of his ministry. "The vows of God are upon us; all our reading should be subservient to the immediate object of instruction. As ministers, we should always note such things as may the better enable us to plead for the 'truth as it is Jesus,' never merely for amusement, or curiosity, or love of learning, simply for its own sake, or the credit and advantages derived from it." The minister with his books should be as a mariner who makes every wind carry him to his destined port. No man, says Mr. Bridges, "attains remarkable eminence or success without an habitual and resolute self-denial in subordinating every secondary point to the favorite object." Perhaps the highest praise for a minister of the gospel, was given by Dr. Johnson to Dr. Watts, in his life of him, when he said, "that whatever he took in hand was by his incessant solicitude for souls converted into theology."

Lest I should be misunderstood, however, on the subject of this general reading, let me say that I do not mean an indiscriminate reading of all the trash now thrown before the public, or even all works of great genius that may be put forth. A well regulated conscience and judgment should be exercised in the choice of them. The primitive Christians brought great numbers of books together and burned them. The Christian Church has ever warned her members against bad books—sometimes indeed erring greatly in her judgments, and persecuting the authors. There is no more propriety in reading all the books that are written, however evil, than in associating with all wicked persons, or going to hear preachers of infidelity or false doctrine, because they are eloquent, learned, or witty. We must use self-denial for the sake of example to others, as well as safety to ourselves. There is a great injury to the minds of ministers from indulging a taste and fondness for light reading. If their minds are wearied with study, and they have no pastoral duty to perform, which can scarcely be, let them rather engage in some active labor

or pleasant exercise which is good for both body and mind. As to reading certain works, as some profess to do, for the improvement of taste and style, much better models can be found. "The question has been often put to me," said Professor Porter, "to what extent ought a theological student to read the modern works of fiction, with a view to improve his own style. The inquiry has commonly had a primary regard to the works of Walter Scott. To the magic of his genius, my own sensibilities have responded whenever I have opened his pages ; but the very enchantment he throws around his subject, has warned me to beware of putting myself in his power. This is one reason why I have read only two or three of all the volumes of fiction from his prolific pen. Another is that, as an instructor of young ministers, I could not, with a good conscience, devote the time requisite for all this reading of romance, nor am I willing that my example should be made an occasion for others to do so, when I am in my grave." Such is my own opinion, and such has been my practice. In the few that I have read, I have found the leading faults of all such works. True piety and the ministerial character were often caricatured. False principles of action were set forth, evil characters made too interesting, and the mind was led off from graver studies. I heard a minister once boast that he had never permitted one of Scott's novels to come out without reading it, but then, he was a minister who probably was better acquainted with these, than with some of the books of the Bible, and who probably read not only Scott's, but many others far worse. As to the works of Byron, after the first few came out, I felt it a duty to read no more, but always to condemn the patronage of them by Christians. As to books of quite a different character, whatever we do read, should be read not only as Christians, but as ministers, with a view to use in the pulpit, or in pastoral duties. In order to the profitable use of good books, remarkable passages should

be marked and reviewed, so as not be forgotten, or to be easily referred to. A common-place book is very convenient for noting down good passages, either writing them out, or referring to them. As to our own thoughts, either while reading, meditating, or conversing, if we would preserve them for use, we should put them down on paper as soon as possible, lest they escape us. Method and a little diligence in this respect would wonderfully contribute to the facility and richness of a minister's compositions as he advances in life.

SELECTION OF A SUBJECT AND TEXT.

Let me now speak of the selection of a subject and text, and the preparation of special matter for the sermon. Much depends upon the choice of a subject, and even of the text. As to the subject, we should choose it not for the world at large, not for the press, but for the congregation to which we minister. It should not be such an one as we can do ourselves most credit by, or can more easily write upon, but such as our people most need. We should be continually noticing their needs, and putting down in a book topics of discourse, and anything called for by the circumstances of the congregation. A sermon thus suitable, and properly managed, will interest and improve far more than one of double the talent on some general topic. "Thou art the man," should be the character of our preaching. Some sermons are like a letter put in the post-office, but addressed to no one. As to the choice of a text, much depends on it. Many persons form their opinion of a preacher from his choice of a text, and not without some reason. Very often a light and fanciful, or singular mind, is betrayed by the selection of a text, which must be constrained or explained away, in order to answer at all,—the words only seeming to embrace the subject, the true meaning being altogether different. A text, therefore, should evidently comprehend the subject, and present it in a striking

manner. Except in the case of a lecture, where exposition of a large portion of scripture is required, a short text is usually most impressive. As to suitable texts and subjects, it may not be amiss to examine the best sermon writers, and see what have commended themselves to those whose labors God has blessed. But beware of plagiarism; beware of borrowing either whole sermons, or large portions, without acknowledgment. Our old friend Dr. Keith used to say, that such is at once both stealing and lying. Any minister of ordinary mind who shall with pious care compose his own discourses, will find such as these, prepared for his own people, more acceptable and useful than the most learned and eloquent he can borrow. There is a nature and sincerity in the one, and a stiffness and art in the other, which will soon be manifest. If a minister's discourses are above the level of his ordinary display of talent, he will soon come under suspicion, and his usefulness be injured.

I do not mean from this, that every minister is to aim at being an original, is to desire no help from others. On the contrary, let him, after having chosen his text and subject, and collected many scriptures on the points of his discourse, then read as much as he pleases, in good authors, on the subject, whether commentators, or sermonizers, or others. Let him become master of the case; let him collect facts and illustrations from any quarter; then, with the materials in hand, let him give shape, and form, and language, such as shall seem best calculated to produce the effect which he desires. Let him also borrow excellent passages, even long ones sometimes, but let him as an honest man acknowledge them.

PRAYER NECESSARY IN COMPOSING IT.

Having chosen a text and subject, not for display, but for usefulness, not to preach ourselves, but Christ, to our people, and being about to prepare our sermon, it becomes us so-

lemnly to consider what a task we are about to engage in, and how much may depend on the manner of its execution. Now, if ever, ought we to look up to Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, for that wisdom which is promised to every man who asks for it. Wickliffe says that the preacher "should be a man of prayer, he needs the internal instruction of the primary teacher." Dr. Owen, with his usual impressiveness says, "for a man solemnly to undertake the interpretation of any portion of scripture, without invocation of God, to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation of him, nor shall I expect the discovery of the truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability." Professor Porter says, "the preacher's success in composing a sermon, depends pre-eminently on the state of heart with which he comes to the work. Suppose he engages in it with the same frigid calculation with which a mechanic sits down to the construction of a clock. His object is to amuse his hearers, and to make an advantageous display of his own powers. With this view he chooses his subject and method—adopts some novel interpretation of his text, becoming a man of erudition—calls to his aid all the researches of profound theological learning, adjusts all his topics of argument, and of address to the passions, according to the best canons of taste. And when the sermon is finished, what is it? A body with fair proportions—elegant, splendid, perhaps, in its decorations—but a body without a soul." In order to insure some prayer before the composition of a sermon, as an antidote to this wicked spirit of ambition which is so apt to insinuate itself into our minds at that time, let me recommend that every sermon should be commenced with a written prayer on the first page of the manuscript, embracing the proper spirit which should animate us, and referring especially to the subjects of the sermon; such an one as it would be proper to read or offer up aloud before

the sermon, if such were the practice. We may read it ourselves after entering into the pulpit, as a preparation for the sermon. I would recommend in like manner a written prayer after the sermon, carefully composed of collects or parts of collects joined together, and suited to the sermon, instead of the constant repetition of some few of the collects. This, however, is not to be in place of more private prayer. Dr. Owen says, "to preach the word and not to follow it with prayer constantly and frequently, is to believe its use, neglect its end, and cast away the seed of the Gospel at random."

During the composition of the sermon, I would again recommend Cotton Mather's rule of often pausing and praying over it; thinking of our people, and praying that God would bless it to their souls. A certain minister said of himself, that he never preached a sermon, which in the composing of it, had not cost him prayers, with strong crying and tears.

"How many of us," said Mr. Cecil, "may subscribe to the confession of a living minister. 'In the preparation of our sermons, alas, how cold, how formal we have often been. Prayer has been the last thing we have thought of, instead of the first. We have made disputations instead of sermons. We have consulted commentators, not our Bibles. We have been led by science, not by the heart. Therefore our discourses have been so tame, so lifeless, so uninteresting to the mass of our hearers, so little savoring of Christ, so little like the inspired example of Paul.'"

LECTURE VI.

ON THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR PREACHING.

HAVING spoken in general terms of the preparation for the pulpit, we will now inquire into the doctrine which must be carried into it, since God has appointed his revealed truth as the great instrument of conversion and sanctification in the hands of his ministers. With so many examples before us as to the subject matter of our preaching, we surely can be at no loss to decide.

All scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, and instruction. Out of these scriptures we are commanded by God, and bound by most solemn ordination vows, to instruct the people committed to our charge. Our Lord enjoined it upon the apostles to teach all things whatsoever he had made known unto them. They were to keep back nothing. Even what they had heard in a corner, must now be proclaimed on the house-top. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, is the rule. We must preach the truth as it is in Jesus ; as he himself preached it, not merely by his own lips while on earth, but afterwards by the Holy Ghost, speaking through the apostles, whom he had commissioned to preach the Gospel when all

things had been revealed and finished. We must follow the examples of our Lord and the apostles, who preached *from all the scriptures*, the things concerning the kingdom. We must preach doctrine, precept, ordinance, prophecy, promise, threatening, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to each his portion in due season. We must try and find out the rule of proportion, and since our Lord has said that some commandments are greater than others—that mercy is better than sacrifice—faith, justice and truth weightier matters than mint, anise and cummin, we must endeavor to form the right estimate, and in our preaching, lay the emphasis in the right place.

CHRIST THE GREAT SUBJECT.

Observing this rule of proportion, there is one great topic which so far excels all others, that it is sometimes spoken of as the whole of religion—all that need be preached. Thus, St. Paul, besides resolving as a man to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ, determined as a preacher to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. “To preach Christ,” is sometimes put for all the doctrines which the apostles delivered. The only answer given by St. Paul and Silas to the great question, “what must I do to be saved,” was, “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”

The more correct manner, however, of speaking on this subject is, not to say, this is the greatest of all themes, but that properly understood it embraces all others. Christ is the Alpha and Omega—the first and the last—the all in all of scripture. Himself often pointed out how all the old scriptures testified of Him. The apostles were continually doing the same, and thus preached Christ, while explaining the Jewish scriptures. The Old Testament, in truth, is one continued, though varied, prophecy of Christ, in types, figures, and predictions. The New Testament is a history of the

fulfilment of these prophecies,—a development of the doctrines which lay concealed under the Old. It is the substance of those shadows which disappeared at the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness. Christ therefore must be the sum and substance of our preaching; if our preaching be right. Christ must be interwoven in all our preaching, as the name of Phidias was in the shield, which could not be effaced without destroying the shield. A certain architect was employed to build a splendid temple, and wishing to have his name as durable at least as the temple, contrived, without intimating his design, to arrange the doors, windows, arches, recesses, spires, etc., of the forefront of the building, in such a manner, as to present in bold relief the letters of his name. When completed, there was the name of the artist forcing itself on every beholder, and not to be obliterated but by the prostration of the whole building.

That minister of the Gospel who would have his name and honor to endure, not for a few centuries, during the continuance of one of our earthly temples, but as long as the Lord of the temple himself, must see and so interweave not himself or his name, but Christ in all his sermons, that his hearers may be forced to see Him, even though they should see no beauty in Him that they should admire Him. All the materials of scripture then should be worked up by us in such a way as that, from the foundation or chief corner-stone to the very top-stone of the temple, Jesus Christ should be read and seen.

“To understand, enter into, and open the various offices of Christ—this is the knowledge of Christ,” says Mr. Cecil. “The divines of the present day are stunted dwarfs in this knowledge, compared with the great men of the last age,” said the same. In reading older divines, I have often been struck with their great use of the Old Testament, in making it bear witness to Christ. Matthew Henry happily remarks, that “the scriptures are the circumference of faith—the round

of which it walks—and every point of which it toucheth—but the centre is Christ, that is, the pole-star on which it resteth.” We must, however, at once warn against a mistake sometimes made on this subject, by those who confound the naming of Christ very frequently in their sermons, using endearing words concerning Him, and speaking His praises in very eloquent terms, with preaching Christ to the saving of the soul. There is also a wrong spirit in some persons, who consider that only to be a gospel sermon, which has Christ Jesus as its immediate and expressed object. It is by no means necessary to force in His sacred name upon every occasion, and allegorize every part of scripture in order to its introduction. As all the principles and duties of the gospel bear a relation more or less direct to Him, so the enforcement of the obligations and details of practical religion upon the ground of this faith, is as strictly conformed to the apostolic pattern, as would be the most exquisite exhibition of the sufferings and death of the Saviour.

THE LAW MUST BE PREACHED.

There is one thing, however, which must be premised, before we proceed further with this subject. In order to preach Christ effectually, it must be done in such a way as to convince the soul of sin. “The whole need no physician, but they that are sick.” How is this to be done? “By the law,” we are told, “is the knowledge of sin.” “The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” This is the first and necessary lesson which the preacher of Christ must teach his people. Until they have learned this, they can know nothing aright of Christ. And the teacher must understand it well himself—must know it in his own heart. “Thou that teachest another, understandest thou not thyself,” must not be said to him of this in particular. I consider this a matter of the first importance, and fear there are many who undertake to

teach others, who have not deep and thorough views of it, and not having them, cannot conduct sinners to Christ. They are blind leaders of the blind. Let me therefore seek to impress it on your minds by the highest authorities. St. Paul is the great preacher of it. In the epistle to the Romans, he enforces it by his own experience, most emphatically, saying, that while he was alive—or fancied himself alive—the law came and slew him. Again, as if oppressed with a body of death, he exclaims, “wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” Let us see what the fathers say. Augustine, than whom none stands higher for evangelical sentiment, says, “The conscience is not to be healed, if it be not wounded. Thou preacheest and pressest the law, comminations, the judgment to come, with much earnestness and importunity. He which hears, if he be not terrified, if he be not troubled, is not to be comforted.” What say our Reformers? Tindal writes thus, “It becomes the preacher of Christ’s glad tidings, first, through the opening of the law, to prove all things sin that proceed not of the Spirit and of faith in Christ, and thereby to bring him to a knowledge of himself, and of his sinfulness and wretchedness, that he might desire help.” Calvin says, “The law is nothing else but a preparation for the gospel. It is the proper function of the law to call the consciences unto God’s judgment and to wound them with fear.” Beza remarks briefly, “Men are ever to be prepared for the gospel by the preaching of the law.” Archbishop Usher, in reply to the question what order is there observed in the delivery of the word for the begetting of faith, says, “First the covenant of the law is urged to make sin and the punishment thereof known; whereupon the sting of the conscience pricketh the heart with the sense of God’s wrath, and maketh a man utterly to despair of any ability in himself to obtain everlasting life. After this preparation, the promises of God are propounded, whereupon the sinner conceiving a hope of pardon, sueth to God for mercy.” “Out of

Christ," said Cecil, "God is not even intelligible, much less amiable. Such men as Clarke and Abernethy talk sublime nonsense. A sick woman once said to me, Sir, I have no notion of God—I can form no notion of Him. You talk to me of Him, but I cannot get a single idea that seems to contain anything. But you know, I said, how to conceive of Jesus Christ as a man. God comes down to you in Him full of kindness and condescension. Ah, Sir, she replied, that gives me something to lay hold on. There I can rest. I understand God in His Son. And if God, she added, is not intelligible out of Christ, much less is He amiable—though I ought to feel Him to be so. He is an object of horror and aversion to me, corrupted as I am. I fear—I tremble—I resist—I hate—I rebel." The right understanding and use of the law is admirably set forth in the brief exposition of it in our catechism, where it is made to reach to the very thoughts and intents of the heart. It is set forth in a still more impressive manner in the ante-communion service, where, on bended knees, we pray, after each commandment, that God would have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep it,—thereby praying forgiveness of all past transgressions, and supplicating grace to keep it with our very hearts hereafter. In Dean Nowel's Catechism, which is an enlargement of our short catechism, and also in all the catechisms and confessions of the Reformation, the same view of the moral law is presented. This mode of coming to Christ deserves to be well considered at this time especially, when a very different one is proposed, when the old Romish view is sought to be introduced. "The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," says Mr. Newman, "by our obeying it and rendering ourselves worthy of the blessing. The publicans and the harlots entered the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees, not because they were worse, but better, than the Pharisees—as the poor are usually better than the rich." According to this doctrine, our works, and not our

cries for mercy, bring us to Christ. "By the law comes the knowledge of sin," says St. Paul. By the law comes goodness, says Mr. Newman, not in these very words, but in language as certain. It is evident that a difference on this subject makes another gospel. To come to Christ condemned by the law, and saying, God be merciful to me a sinner, and to come to him with a measure of holiness obtained, and obedience performed, is to come to him by two roads, as wide apart as east and west. Moreover the union effected, or supposed to be effected, after coming to Christ by these opposite routes, is altogether different. In the one case—according to the old plan—it is an union of our souls to Christ by faith and penitence, attended with joy and peace in believing, and leading to all holiness of heart and life. In the other, it is an unintelligible mystical union, chiefly by the sacraments, an infusion of Christ's whole nature, soul, body, and divinity, into ours, but not in such a manner as St. Peter meant when he said, "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, whereby we become partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption which is in the world through lust." The old apostolic method of holding up Christ on high, as the brazen serpent was, for the conversion of sinners, is considered as unsafe, licentious, encouraging sinners to presumption. He must be reserved, kept back as it were within the vail, until by certain means, the sinful have been in some measure sanctified and made meet for entering into the holy of holies. Thus Christ's death and sacrifice become not the instruments of conversion, but the rewards of moral worth. Against this most ruinous perversion of Christianity, let me warn you.

NO RESERVE IN PREACHING CHRIST.

Perhaps it may be asked, is there not something in our Lord's own conduct and preaching, to countenance this doctrine of reserve as to the atonement, and the freeness of his

grace to sinners? We answer, that there were manifest reasons why Christ did not and could not preach on all those points which the apostle afterward dwelt upon so constantly and emphatically. His death, resurrection, ascension, the sending forth the Holy Ghost, had not taken place, and therefore he could only refer to them occasionally, as things to come. Even these his disciples, slow of heart to believe, could not receive. The things which he at last plainly taught his disciples were at first only delivered as they could bear them, for they were as children. In the sermon on the mount, we find him at first clearing away prejudices, removing errors, giving a more spiritual view of the law, thus preparing for the gospel, but saying nothing of the atonement. So also in the Lord's Prayer; we are not there directed to pray in his name. But the time came for him to say, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." So as to the atonement; although John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and our Lord made frequent allusions to it, and after his resurrection said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory," yet it is certain that the more full and glorious exhibition of the plan of salvation was reserved for the Holy Ghost, speaking by the apostles. And their preaching, which we have in the epistles, is the true pattern for us. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you," said our Lord, "but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things." "When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Moreover, nothing can be clearer, than that all which our Lord taught in private to his disciples, and communicated by the Holy Ghost afterwards, was intended and commanded to be taught, publicly, plainly, freely to all, on the peril of damnation to

those who should attempt anything like concealment. The proposal indeed is not more wicked, than idle and impracticable. If the doctrine of the atonement is preached publicly at all, it must be preached so as that some shall hear it, who are not yet good enough to receive it. We should be thankful that the Bible is free to all, and the doors of our churches open to all, so that whoever will enter may hear the glorious doctrine of the atonement read in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the gospels and epistles of the New.

THE MORALIZING SCHOOL.

Without professing, however, to hold in reserve the doctrine of Christ crucified as something unsafe to be freely offered to all, there have been from time to time those who have undervalued it, by substituting something in whole or part in its room. Thus, in the earlier ages, the Platonic Christian, to the great injury of religion, sought to mingle together the doctrines of the gospel with the vain philosophy and barren ethics of the pagan systems. Dearly did the Church of God pay for the experiment. Since the days of the Reformation there has been a school of moralizing divines, who, neglecting the life-giving doctrines of Christ, contented themselves with a meagre morality, little better than that of the ancient philosophers.

“ And oft, when Paul had served them with a text,
Has Plato, Tully, Epictetus, preached.”

The Church of England has suffered severely from this school. The Church of Scotland also was thus afflicted not a little in times past. There have been, however, many noble instances of reformation, after a full trial of the scheme. Mr. Walker, of Truro, Milner, of Hull, Thomas Scott, and Chalmers, all tried the moralizing plan and all most signally failed. They all tried the evangelical system, and were signally blessed. The last fifty years has witnessed the trial

of it by thousands, and the revival of true religion, and the very preservation of the Church has been the result of it. This is confessed even by those who are seeking to improve upon the system, having some deeper thoughts and greater developments of divine truth with which to perfect that which is lacking in the evangelical system. During the period when a lifeless morality was preached, thousands left the English Church, and thousands the Episcopal Church of America, preferring to hear for the most part ignorant itinerants and laymen, who dwelt more on the doctrines of the gospel. Archbishop Secker remarked to his clergy, "We have in fact lost many of our people to sectaries, by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical; and shall never recover them from the extravagances into which they have run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to the right way ourselves,—declaring all the counsel of God, and that principally in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Again he says, "If you have preached a considerable time in a place and done little or no good, there must, in all probability, be some fault, not only in your hearers, but in yourself and your sermons; for the word of God, duly dispensed, is to this day, as it was originally, powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword." "Inquire, therefore," he says, "where the fault may be." Bishops Horne, Horsley, Barrington, Porteus, and many other eminent English bishops, have delivered similar testimonies, ascribing the secessions from the Church to the neglect of evangelical preaching.

TESTIMONY OF MISSIONARIES.

I shall conclude this lecture by an interesting passage from the annals of the Moravian Missions, which furnish strong confirmation of the truth of what I have affirmed. When these missionaries explained to the sottish Greenlanders, the nature and perfection of God, and His just claims upon His

creatures, "the poor heathen (says Mr. Bridges) were bound up and frozen like their own icy mountains. But in reading to them the affecting scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, the heart began to melt in tenderness, contrition, faith, and love. They begged to have the story repeated, and it was to them 'as life from the dead.' " The following was the touching account given of himself by the first convert :—" Brethren," said he, "I have been a heathen, and have grown old among the heathen, therefore I know how heathen think. Once a preacher came and explained to us that there was a God. We answered, 'Dost thou think us to be so ignorant as not to know that.' Another preacher began to teach us, you must not steal, lie, or get drunk. We answered, 'Thou fool, dost thou think that we don't know that,' and thus dismissed him. After a time brother Christian Henry Ranch came to my hut, and set down by me. He spoke to me nearly as follows :—"I come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He sends to let you know that He will make you happy, and deliver you from the misery in which you lie at present. To this end He became a man, gave His life a ransom for man, and shed His blood for us.' I could not forget his words. Even while I was asleep, I dreamed of that blood which Christ shed for us. I found this to be something different from what I had ever heard before, and I interpreted Christian Henry's words to the other Indians. Thus, through the grace of God, an awakening took place amongst us. I say therefore, brethren, preach Christ our Saviour, and his sufferings and death, if you would have your words to gain entrance among the heathen."

LECTURE VII.

ON OBSERVING THE LAW OF PROPORTION AS TO THE SUBJECTS ON WHICH WE PREACH.

IN the last lecture I maintained that Christ should be the great and constant theme of discourse. But lest you should suppose that I thereby encouraged the neglect of any part of God's word, I shall now speak of the duty of weighing well the comparative importance of every doctrine and duty in order to lay the proper emphasis thereon. It is of great importance, that ministers of religion form a right estimate of the relative value of the different parts of the great scheme of redemption, lest by forming a wrong judgment we disturb the proportion of the whole, thereby throwing into confusion what God appointed to be all order and harmony, and greatly weakening what he designed to be power and strength. God is emphatically the God of order in all his works, and any change in the due proportion established must be productive of evil. "We see the whole world," says Hooker, "and each part thereof, so compacted, that as long as each part performeth only that which is natural to it, it thereby preserves both other things and itself also. Contrariwise let any principal thing, as the sun, the moon, any one of the heavens or ele-

ments but once cease, or fail, or swerve, and who doth not easily conceive, that the sequel thereof would be ruin both to itself and whatsoever dependeth upon it." And again reasoning "from nature up to nature's God," he says, "Measure is that which perfecteth all things, because every thing is for some end; neither can any thing be available to any end, which is not proportionable thereto, and to proportion, as well excesses as defects are opposite." And again, "forasmuch as nothing doth perish, but only through excess or defect of that, the due proportioned measure whereof doth give perfection, it followeth that measure is likewise the preservative of all things." In consistency with this, in speaking of the various ways in which wisdom teacheth, he says, "We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other; but let all her ways be according to their place and degree adored."

THIS ILLUSTRATED BY REFERENCE TO THE BODY AND SOUL OF
MAN.

The truth and importance of the principle of which we are speaking, may be illustrated and enforced by a reference to the human body, so fearfully and wonderfully made by the hand of a divine architect, and to which the Church of God, in its proportion of faith, its order, its gifts, and graces, is likened. All its members, though necessary to its perfection, are not to its existence, and therefore not all equally honorable. No one of them, however, may boast itself against another, saying, I have no need of thee, but all must perform the office assigned, and receive the honor and cultivation which are due. The head, as the seat of the understanding, and the heart, as the seat of life, must be most carefully guarded. A blow on the one may annihilate reason, an arrow or ball piercing the other, or its action by any cause for a moment stopped, death spreads through all its members;

while as to the others, though they may, by neglect or violence, be maimed or much injured, the man may still survive, and be able to perform the chief functions of life.

Necessity indeed seems to require, for carrying on the occupations of this world, that some of the members of the body should be more cultivated than others; and this is seen in their greater prominence, strength and agility; but in order to the greatest perfection of the whole man, all should receive their due proportion of exercise and culture. This is likewise true of the inward, spiritual, and more important part of man. All the faculties and affections thereof, deserve culture according to the measure of their importance, and if one of them receive undue attention, the others must receive proportional loss. So is it also to the relative importance of the two parts of our system, the corporeal and the spiritual. The body may be so pampered and increased by undue attention, indulgence, and high living, that the mind enclosed in its fatness, may be smothered, and become inert and useless. On the contrary, the mind may be, as it has been, the object of such exclusive attention, that the body shall become weakened and diseased, till at length, by the law of reaction, the mind itself is made to suffer, and that perfection of our nature, "*mens sana in corpore sano*," is forfeited.

The same may be said of some of the avocations of life, where the neglect of this rule is attended with the loss of those benefits which belong to its observance.

THE SAME IS TRUE OF MANY OTHER THINGS,

In agriculture, for instance, there are those who bestow undue attention on such lesser matters as the ornament of gardens and grounds, to the neglect of the fields which yield the solid nutriment to man and beast, until gardens, grounds, and fields, must all be parted with; while others, neglecting the enclosures which protect the growing crops, or the barns

which are needed to preserve them, lose much of the benefit of their hard labor. So also in the legal profession, there are those who, disdaining trifles, seize upon the strong points of the case, pressing them to the utmost, rightly judging that it is not by the number, but by the weight of the arguments, that a cause should be decided; while others of smaller minds weary out both judge and jury with a tedious enumeration of trivial considerations, relying on the number rather than the force thereof. And yet men of strong minds should not forget that these inferior points belong to the case, and that many a cause has been lost by the too great neglect of them.

MOST EMPHATICALLY TRUE OF RELIGION.

If in all the affairs of men this rule of proportion should be observed—if there be truth in the saying of an ancient philosopher, “that everything both great and small should fulfil the task which destiny hath set it,” how peculiarly applicable to man is it as to the most important of all things with which he has to do—religion; which consists in things to be believed, and to be done, all of them differing more or less in character or importance and requiring a corresponding proportion of time, thought, and zeal. There are diversities of gifts, though but one spirit,—divers orders, though but one ministry—and Christ himself most plainly declares, that there are some things more and some things less important, the former of which must be done, although the latter should not be left undone; that is, the former done first, chiefly, and with the greatest zeal; the latter not left undone, except when interfering with the former, or prevented by some sufficient cause. The Spirit speaking of the whole Church, compares it at one time to the human body, composed of various members, having each its proper office, and each differing in honor; at another to a house, whose foundation or chief corner-stone is Christ, and Christians are the different parts,

fitly joined together, as living stones making one great temple. As to the former comparison, it has been well remarked by Hooker, "that the Church being a mystical body must be proportional in its parts, or it cannot stand;" while as to the latter, all of us know that a house, whether we regard its beauty, utility, or strength, must be built according to rule, and that its foundation must be stronger and broader than its top.

"The inverted pyramid can never stand."

The Apostle Paul, in speaking of the Church as the mystical body of Christ—that is, the blessed company of believers—exhorts each member of the same "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath given to every man the measure of faith." Now what is true of the ministers and members of the Church, is true of their gifts and graces, of their duties, doctrines, ordinances and ceremonies of religion. Prophesying, that is, preaching, or expounding scripture, was preferred by the apostle to all other gifts, even to miraculous ones, and yet he had a more excellent way to show than that—namely, charity, which was greater than even faith and hope, mighty as they were. A neglect of this distinction, so clearly recognized in Scripture, has been productive of much evil to the cause of religion, just as the disproportioned attachment of our hearts to some of the objects of this life is destructive of our peace and comfort. The man whose mind and heart are under the direction of wisdom, is one, who "Loving in proportion, loves in peace." But it may be asked, can anything coming from God in the way of revelation and requirement, be in any sense small? Is not he accursed who continueth not in all things to do God's will? Are we not warned against despising what are called little things? Does not our Lord declare, that he who shall break one of the least of His commandments, and shall teach men

so, shall be counted least in the kingdom of heaven—that is, unworthy of it? Does not the infiniteness of God, and the inconceivable importance of every thing bearing upon our eternal interests, stamp an infinite value on the least of his directions, so that even an idle word shall be brought into judgment? Does not the very easiness of a command make disobedience the more criminal? And is it for us to value and graduate the appointments of heaven, saying which may and which may not be neglected with impunity?

To all this it may be replied, that though God is an infinite being, and his love of infinite value, because all tending to an infinite good, yet are they given to a finite being who has only a limited portion of time, thought, and affection to bestow upon them, and he must see and divide himself rightly amongst them all, according to their relative importance, ascertaining this as well as he can from the word of God, by the help of a sound judgment and careful observation on the effect thereof. Should he err, and bestow too much on one, he takes just so much from others, thereby wronging his own soul, and injuring the cause of religion. The ministers of the Gospel ought especially to attend to this rule, as it is required of them “rightly to divide God’s word,” and after our Lord’s example, to say, which are the greatest commandments, which those weightier matters not to be dispensed with under the penalty of eternal ruin, and at the same time to show how none must be neglected, and none have undue partiality displayed towards them. In all ages there have been those, who fixing their minds on some favorite doctrine, precept, or external rite of religion, and magnifying it into undue importance, to the neglect of others, have thus opened one fruitful source of heresies and schisms in the Church of God.

MEN PRONE TO BE POSITIVE ON SMALL AND DOUBTFUL THINGS.

It is also notorious that men are more prone to lay the undue emphasis on small things rather than great, on things external, rather than internal, and on things dark and doubtful, rather than on things clear and undisputed. There is an admirable passage in the writings of that eminent servant of God, Archbishop Leighton, which it could be wished were engraven on every heart. It was written at a time when disputes ran high between parties within our own Church, as well as with those who had separated from it. "Doubtless," he says, "the things wherein we agree are incomparably greater than those wherein we disagree, and, therefore, should be more powerful to unite us, than the other to divide us. But to restrain myself and stop here, if we love our own and the Church's peace, there be two things, I conceive, we should most carefully avoid, *the bestowing too great zeal upon small things, and too much confidence of opinion upon doubtful things.*" Bishop Pilkington, also, one of the good Reformers, in protesting against compulsion as to some of the vestments, says most truly, "but this is the malice of Satan, that when he cannot overthrow the greatest matters, he will raise great troubles in trifles. Peter and Paul agreed in the chiefest articles of our salvation, and yet they differed so about meats, that Paul withstood and rebuked him openly. Paul and Barnabas fell at such bitter contention whether Mark should go with them or not, so that they parted companies, and went either of them sundry ways. God defend us from the like."

The want of a proper regulation of mind to teach us the right use of the law of proportion, is happily set forth by Hooker, in showing how our fancies or affections mislead us in judging of scripture. "Pythagoras, (he says,) by bringing up his scholars in the speculative knowledge of numbers, made their conceits therein so strong, that when they came to the contemplation of things natural, they imagined that in every

particular thing they even beheld, as it were with their eyes, how the elements of number gave essence and being to the works of nature—a thing in reason impossible, which, notwithstanding, through their misfashioned pre-conceit, appeared to them no less certain than if nature had written it in the foreheads of all the creatures of God.” He then shows how those who were endeavoring to destroy the Episcopal Church, in order to build up their own on its ruins, imagined that in every scripture they could see the exact pattern of their own discipline, even in the smallest matters. Contending against the finding any such exact pattern in many things clearly set down in scripture, he justly says: “Most sure it is, that when men’s affections do form their opinions, they are, in defence of error, more earnest a great deal than, for the most part, sound believers in the maintenance of the truth apprehended, according to the nature of that evidence which scripture yieldeth; which, being in some things plain as in the principles of Christianity, in some things as in these matters of discipline more dark and doubtful, formeth correspondently that inward assent which God most graciously worketh by it as by his effectual instrument.” (See preface to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*.)

THE YOUNG MOST POSITIVE.

It is also a fact which deserves to be mentioned, that the young are most generally apt to be positive and violent on such subjects. As their outward vision is far more distinct than that of the aged, seeing things distant, as if near at hand, so do they rely on their mental vision, and cannot agree to see some things as through a glass, darkly, but all things face to face; sometimes speaking slightly indeed of older persons who are more doubtful. This certainty of belief sometimes leads to greater violence of word and action, which has injured the good cause of religion not a little. It has been

well said that "when men become so old as to confer with grey hairs, they usually abate something of their violence." Bishop Burnet in his preface to the exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, has an excellent remark on this subject, worthy the consideration of all men, but especially of ministers of religion. "When a man," he says, "is inclined by strong arguments, to an opinion against which he sees difficulties which he cannot resolve, he ought either to suspend his assent, or if he sees a superiority of argument on one side, he may be determined by that, though he cannot satisfy even himself in the objections that are against it. In that case he ought to reflect upon the weakness and defects of his faculties, which cannot rise up to full and comprehensive ideas of things, especially in that which relates to the attributes of God, and to his counsels or acts." And if any feel still unwilling to confess themselves thus unable to master the difficult and doubtful things of religion, we might again quote the testimony of one not dull of mind to perceive the truth, nor fearful of heart to declare it. "When God himself," says Hooker, "doth speak those things, which either for height or sublimity of matter, or else for secrecy of performance, we are not able to reach unto, as we may be ignorant without danger, so it is no disgrace to confess that we are ignorant."

But we may rise still higher in our authorities for humility in regard to things doubtful and difficult in God's word. One of the sacred writers, (St. Peter,) acknowledges in relation to another, (St. Paul,) that there are some things hard to be understood—actually hard, he doubtless meant, even at that day—which the unlearned and the unstable wrest to their own destruction. The more sober-minded do not insist upon understanding them, being satisfied with the plain things which make us wise unto salvation. The stable ones, also, who are established in great principles, cannot be moved by a few difficult questions such as those about the divine decrees.

THOSE WHO TAKE THEIR CREED FROM OTHERS, VERY POSITIVE.

It ought to be observed also on this subject, that those are most positive and intolerant who most implicitly take their faith from others, instead of drawing it by careful study and humble prayer from the word of God. The Romanists, who blindly take every thing from the infallible oracle of their Church, think it impossible they can be wrong, and are therefore disposed most violently to condemn others; and those who approach nearest in sentiment to the Church of Rome in this blind reliance on others, are most like it also, in their judgments on those who differ from them.

A FALSE METHOD OF SETTling DIFFERENCES.

Before dismissing this more general train of remark, I would caution against one error in the application of this law of proportion. There are some good persons, and some indolent ones, and some ignorant ones, who adopt a very compendious, and easy, and as they suppose, charitable method of settling all differences, and determining what is truth and duty. If it be a personal matter, they say both must be about equally wrong, without inquiring into the merits of the case. If it be a matter of doctrine, or opinion, or religious observance which is under discussion, they suppose that truth must lie somewhere about midway, and therefore as by a rule of numbers, they decide it. Now this may be good arithmetic, but it is not sound theology or morality. Truth is not that which always lies just half-way between two opposing parties or opinions. That is truth which God's word teaches, that is duty which it commands. and it is our part humbly and diligently to seek it out. Some think that to stand between two opposing parties and condemn both, is the only real independence and true charity. But there may be as little independence, and as much uncharitableness in this, as in being of the one or the other party. So are we constituted, that on

the great questions of morals, religion and politics, which agitate and divide mankind, almost all men who pretend to think or read, will feel themselves more or less inclined to the one or the other; and when this is the case, there can be no harm, but rather honesty in the candid avowal of it. The wrong is in the indulgence of an uncharitable spirit, in shutting our eyes upon what is good and true on either side, and in not refusing to advocate and do what we believe to be evil, no matter who may hold and practise the same. Let all seek peace by promoting truth in a proper manner, and in moderating those with whom they argue and act, whenever they think them disposed to excess; thus, will the greatest amount of unity that can be hoped for on earth, be secured.

THE APPLICATION OF THIS LAW TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTS.

The application of the foregoing principle to the different subjects which you have to present to your hearers, is a matter of great importance. The first great division of things pertaining to religion, to which it should be applied, is that which separates them into internal and external acts. As to the superiority of the one over the other of these two classes, our Lord has left us no room for doubt or hesitation in the answer he made to one who tempted him by a question concerning the comparative importance of the commandments. Bishop Butler, in his admirable work on the analogy of revealed religion to things in nature and providence, speaking of the proneness of man to substitute positive observances for inward piety to God, and benevolence to man, as set forth in his first great command, and that which is like unto it, says, "that upon the occasion of mentioning together positive and moral duties, the scripture always puts the stress of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former; which though no sort of allowance to neglect the former when they do

not interfere with the latter, yet is a plain intimation that when they do, the latter is to be preferred." In relation to the passage in Hosea quoted by our Lord, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," he adds, "It can hardly be doubted that the thing our Lord intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it as they might, wherein the spirit of religion consists—that it consists in moral piety and virtue, as distinguished from forms and ritual observances." But we must ever remember that the same Lord has said, that while the former must be done, the latter must not be left undone. Thus as to the sacraments, which are outward acts of religion, there have been those who have overvalued, and those who have undervalued their relative importance. Bishop Ridley says, "the Fathers have both herbs and weeds, and the Papists commonly gather the weeds and leave the herbs. And they (the Fathers) speak many times more vehemently in sound of words than they did mean in deed, or than they would have done if they had foreseen what sophistical wranglers would have succeeded them." "In all ages, the Devil hath stirred up some light-heads to esteem the sacraments but lightly, as to the empty and bare signs, whom the Fathers have resisted so fiercely, that in their fervor, they seem in sound of words to run too far the other way, and to give too much to the sacraments, when they did think too measurably." (See *Works of Bishop Ridley*, Parker Library, p. 114.)

I need not say that our Church protests against their being regarded as empty signs, but makes them effectual witnesses by which God works invisibly in the hearts of the penitent and believing, confirming their faith and increasing their grace, not however as a charm operates, but as the word of God, which they set forth to the senses, operates upon moral and intelligent beings.

THE LAW APPLIED TO THE SCRIPTURES AND OTHER WRITINGS.

This principle should be applied to the estimate we form of the sacred scriptures, and all other writings, whether setting forth the opinions of individuals, or the decisions of churches. There has ever been a tendency to raise the symbolical books of churches to a level with the inspired writings. Some of the Jews placed their Talmud on the same ground with the scriptures. Many of the German theologians, since the Reformation, claimed the same respect for their symbolical books. How differently have the fathers of our Church spoken of the Prayer Book. In the preface to it they claim "only such just and favorable construction as in common equity is due to all human writings." What a rebuke does the following passage from Hooker cast upon such extravagance? "Whatsoever is spoken of God or of things appertaining to God, otherwise than as the truth is, though it seem an honor, it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men do sometimes abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation; so likewise we must take great heed, lest in attributing to scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which it has most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed." If there be those who have even injured scripture in the estimation of some by claiming for it more than God designed, how much more must unfounded and exaggerated praises bestowed on any human writings expose them to injury.

THE LAW APPLIED TO DOCTRINES AND PRECEPTS.

This principle ought to be faithfully applied to the inculcation of the doctrines and precepts of religion, the faith that saves, and the works which are the fruits of it. The apostle enjoins it on Titus to "attend to the things which become sound doctrine," and then shows how it is to be done by exhorting different persons to the duties and virtues which

belong to their age and station. He urges him to "affirm constantly that they which have believed be careful to maintain good works." It will not do to say with some, that the new nature given to the christian will, of its own accord, certainly and necessarily, do all such good works without this urging. It will not do them all, but will neglect many of them, unless ministers, after the example of our Lord and His apostles, urge them to abound therein. A due enforcement of doctrines and duties is very important to the making a full trial of our ministry.

THE LAW APPLIED TO RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

I will only refer the application of this principle to one other subject—that of religious controversy. Although most persons are too fond of it, and carry it too far, there are some who forget that our Lord came to send a sword as well as peace through the earth. Bishop Jewell has well remarked that, "To have peace with man, we may not be at war with God." "The name of peace is a pleasant thing," saith Hilary, "but yet beware, for peace is one thing, and bondage is another. For if it should be as they seek to have it, (speaking of the Romanists,) that Christ should be commanded to keep silence, that the truth of the gospel should be betrayed, that horrible errors should be cloaked, that christian men's eyes should be blinded, and that they should be suffered to conspire openly against God; this were not a peace, but a most ungodly covenant of servitude." We must only see to it that the cause is just, the reason sufficient for the controversy, and then conduct it in a right spirit, with fair and candid arguments, exaggerating nothing, avoiding needless personality, and all misrepresentation of our opponents. Hooker says, "good things do lose the grace of their goodness when in good sort they are not performed." Bishop Ridley also says, "that the truth neither needeth, nor will be maintained

with lies." "That it is a sin even to lie against the devil, for in that thou liest, indeed, thou dost the devil's work, thou dost him service, and takest the devil's part."

ONE ERROR NOT TO BE OPPOSED BY ANOTHER.

In opposition, however, to all that can be said against extremes or disproportionate emphasis, there is, it is to be feared, in too many minds a strong impression that the most effectual way of overcoming one error or evil is the use of its opposite. Things in the natural world are resorted to as proofs and illustrations. It is said that a bent bow or stick can only be straightened by being violently drawn into the opposite direction, and that the earth and other bodies are only kept together, and in their respective orbits, by the two opposing forces, the centripetal and the centrifugal, which are both rushing violently towards opposite extremes, but in their conflict preserve an equilibrium. But although there may be many things alike in the natural and moral world, it does not follow that all things are precisely so; and at any rate it does not follow that in the promotion of man's highest happiness and his greatest glory on earth, God cannot dispense with the service of falsehood in order to sustain truth. Although God can and does bring good out of evil, yet does he forbid us to do evil, that good may come. There is only one thing in which he commands us to be zealously affected, and that is *in a good thing*.

LECTURE VIII.

ON RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

Our last lecture on the law of proportion, naturally leads to one on the right division of the word of God, amongst those to whom it belongs, that each may have his portion in due season. We must rightly classify our hearers, before we can rightly distribute God's word among them. A mistake here must be infinitely more injurious than the error of a physician, who, not knowing the disease of his patient, gives him improper medicine, or supposing him to be without disease when dangerously ill, prescribes nothing.

Let us then inquire what are the leading divisions of the human family, as they present themselves to the christian minister for the application of God's word.

FIRST GREAT DIVISION.

In the first place, we will consider the human family as divided into those who are on either side of the age of discretion. All have been on the one side. All were once infants, though millions perished at their birth. Other millions passing on through the different stages between their birth and the age of discretion, died without reaching it. Others reach and

pass beyond it. As to those dying in infancy, we may surely believe, that He who while on earth took little children into His arms, saying, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," will not refuse them a place in some of the many mansions of heaven. In the command given to the Jew to enter his child into covenant with God, and in the continuation of the same privilege to christian parents, we may see a clear proof of God's gracious disposition towards our little ones. Surely this is a portion of God's word which we may give to bereaved parents, bidding them not to sorrow as those who are without hope, but, confidently believing that God in love has taken their children to himself, resolve with David, that since they cannot bring them back to earth to be their joy and comfort here, they will prepare to go to them. As to the numbers who die at different ages between unconscious infancy and the fearful, though unknown period of accountability, we have much to hope and expect from a just and merciful God, who gave his Son to death for all. Much there may be to change in their natures before they can enter the abodes of the blessed, and God is fully able to do this, when and as he pleases. Something may have been done in the way of preparation by means of a pious education enforced by God's Spirit, as something is done in the way of preparation in adults before they turn unto God with renewed hearts. There is a large and interesting portion of God's word to be meted out to parents for their children, and to children themselves, both by parents and ministers. Parents must bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ministers must be tender shepherds, feeding the lambs of Christ's flock, and bearing them in their arms. There is in God's word milk for babes, as well as meat for men, nor must it be withheld. Children religiously trained, the subjects of many prayers, and living under every favorable influence, are more likely to choose the one thing needful, on

reaching the age of discretion, than those who have been neglected and left to their own natural corruptions. A moral change may have been going on, obstacles may have been diminishing, prepossessions establishing, good habits forming, and thus all things be more favorable for a deliberate choice of God's service and acceptance of salvation through Christ, when the time for a decision comes.

SECOND GREAT DIVISION EMBRACING ALL THE REST.

Having said thus much on rightly dividing that portion of the word of God which belongs to such as have not reached the age of accountability, let us inquire what is due to the two grand divisions which make up all the rest of mankind, from that period to their death. That there are but two, however many may be their modifications, surely none will deny. As there is but one heaven for the righteous, and but one hell for the wicked, so we find all men divided into two classes, though called by various names, such as saints and sinners, enemies and friends, children and servants of God, or of the devil, those who hate and those who love God, the pardoned and the condemned, the spiritually minded and the carnally minded. All men are thus divided and characterised in the fullest sense, after having reached the age of discretion. If they do not then by their own act embrace the life that is offered them in Christ, they choose death. Henceforth they must of necessity be in one or other of two states, on the one side or the other of a dividing line, travelling on one or other of two roads, which lead either to heaven or hell; for we read of no third place, and of course of no "via media" leading to it. A limbus infantum, or place for unbaptized children, and a purgatory for the half-converted, half-justified adults, have been imagined, and even boldly asserted, but God's word, large as it is, knows nothing of either, and therefore we have nothing to divide to our hearers about them. In our Homily on

Prayer, you will find this subject clearly and forcibly set forth. This dreadful fact of a dividing line commenced on earth, widening and deepening into an impassable gulf, should press heavily on the heart of every minister, making him to urge them who are on the side of the wicked, to escape for their lives from the region of death.

THE TIME WHEN, AND THE ACT BY WHICH WE PASS FROM DEATH
TO LIFE.

As the time when we become the sons of God by faith in Christ, and pass from death to life, and the act by which it is done, are the most interesting and important of all others, we should see, and inform our people well, out of God's word, in relation to them. As to the act, it is one of the most extraordinary operations of the human mind; or rather it is the great work of God in the soul of man; for none can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Our Lord while on earth seems to have been preparing the minds of men for its exercise, by the various and wonderful cures which he effected in the bodies of men. When he saw that the blind, the lame, the leprous had faith to be healed, he put forth his divine power and they were healed. You should often appeal to these affecting cases of bodily disease and utter hopelessness, in order to show the nature and power of true faith. You must also go back to the faith of Abraham, father of the faithful, and of all the ancient saints of God, as set forth in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews, in order to show that the faith which saves, or which as a hand lays hold of salvation, is the special, confiding trust of a penitent believer in Christ. You must be able to show how entirely all other things, however necessary in their place, and to the purpose for which they were appointed, and however clearly connected with this, yet have no part in our justification. You will adduce the testimony of St. Paul on this subject, as too clear to be disputed. You

will find in the course of your ministry, great need of this doctrine. If true faith in Christ as a Saviour be not sufficient of itself for salvation, if any works or observances besides be absolutely necessary to our passing from death to life, then will the condition of many persons having true faith and penitence be hopeless. How many are there who, after having come to the most heartfelt faith in Christ, and deepest penitence towards God, are suddenly cut off without any opportunity of baptism, or other outward works. The most remarkable illustration and confirmation of this great doctrine was reserved for the last moments of our Lord's ministry on earth, and it should be thankfully, as well as wisely used by his ministers, as it is by the Church in which you are to minister. No human being ever left this world with such a positive assurance from the lips of Christ himself, that heaven should be his, as did the dying, but penitent and believing thief, who had opportunity for nothing but his penitence and faith. It has been said, that this is the only case on the scripture record, where one repenting and believing in his last moments was certainly pardoned, and that it was under such circumstances as had never before occurred, and could not occur again, and that perhaps this may prove the only case of real death-bed repentance. Might we not, with equal propriety, say, that the case of the one who died impenitent and unbelieving on the other side of our Lord, is the only one who died thus, under such circumstances, and therefore may prove to be the only case of one dying in a hardened state. Ought we not rather to consider them as each representing a class, the one designed to encourage the vilest sinners to seek mercy from Christ, though at a late period; the other to warn against the delay of conversion, lest they be hardened and die in their sins, though surrounded with all religious advantages. We are well persuaded that instead of this being the only instance of a genuine conversion at a late period, that there are thousands

now in paradise with the dying thief, who either truly embraced Christ, and were soon after unexpectedly called away, or else were cast upon a bed of death, where they were able to do little else than cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," or with the dying thief, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

THIS THE DOCTRINE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

That such is undoubtedly the doctrine of our Church, the most cursory view of our articles, offices, and homilies will show. While you should, according to the vows which you will make at your ordination, instruct the people on this and all other subjects, out of God's own word, yet it is allowable and proper, that you should appeal also to our standards of doctrine on this point especially, since it was on this point beyond all others, that our fathers emphatically dwelt in their controversies with Rome. I do not mean to detain you long repeating the words of the articles, or the arguments and illustrations of the homilies on this subject, as I trust you are already familiar with them, and I hope, next to the scriptures, you will make them your guides. I will only remark, that nothing can be more emphatic, nothing more exclusive, than the article in declaring that we are justified by faith only, for the merits of Christ—that is, by faith as the instrument, and the merits of Christ as the cause of our justification. As to the homilies, one passage from that on Good Friday shall suffice. "Mark these words, that, 'whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.' Here is the mean whereby we must obtain eternal life, namely *faith*." Again, "By this you may well perceive, that *the only mean and instruments on our part is faith*"—that is, such a sure trust as had been described. For the right use of the case of the dying thief, I also refer you to the Office for the Sick, and the Homily on Good Works, in both of which you will perceive that

the view I have taken of that most remarkable event is entirely justified.

But lest for a moment you should suppose that your teacher or the Church favors the false and dangerous hopes too often entertained of death-bed conversion, let me add that the Church in her Homilies strongly protests against such error. In the Homily on Falling from God, she says, "God who hath promised His mercy to those who are truly penitent, (although it be at the latter end,) hath not promised the presumptuous sinner, either that he shall have long life, or that he shall have repentance at the last end. But for that purpose He hath made every man's death uncertain, that he should not put his hope in the end, and in the mean season (to God's high displeasure) live ungodly." In the Homily on Repentance, we are exhorted to make use of favorable occasions, "lest when thou wouldst repent, thou shouldst not have grace to do it. For to repent is the good gift of God, which he will never grant to them who will make a mock of His threatening, or seek to rule His Spirit as they list, as though His workings and Spirit were tied unto their will." In the Homily on Certain Places of Scripture, those who have gone through the various grades of sin until they have reached the seat of the scornful, are considered as beyond hope.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

My own opinion on the subject has often been expressed in what I have said and written as to funeral sermons, discouraging their general use, as being calculated to excite false hopes concerning death-bed repentances; far the greater number of which being deceptions. To believe in the possibility of a genuine death-bed repentance, and that in the aggregate many such have occurred, is quite a different thing from pronouncing favorably as to the state of the deceased, from such slight signs as are too often adduced in funeral

sermons and obituary notices. Funeral sermons are of pagan origin, and were copied by the early Christians, who made a sad use of them. Among the heathen, the elevation of eulogised heroes to the rank of gods, and among Christians the canonizing of saints, and the supposed intercession of the same for their semi-worshippers on earth, were the consequences of this unhappy practice. It is much to be desired that, instead of regular funeral sermons on every occasion, when ministers are so strongly tempted to the utterance of too favorable language, and almost forced to the suppression of truth, it were left to them at their discretion to make a few touching remarks in the house of the dead, and only on special occasions present the characters of truly pious persons as examples to others, in a more full discourse from the pulpit. Where they are generally or often preached, the most distressing mistakes sometimes occur, through the ignorance of the minister as to the real characters of the deceased. I have known of some, where the characters given to the dead were the merest caricatures, and well calculated not only to grieve the friends of true religion, but to cover with shame the relatives present, who knew the very contrary to be the truth.

THE PORTION TO BE DIVIDED TO THE FAITHFUL.

Having spoken of the portion of God's word which should be divided to those who are in a state of spiritual death, and shown how it is that they must escape from it, we will now proceed to that which belongs to such as have passed from death to life—from under condemnation to a state of acceptance with God. These, instead of being taken away at once with the dying thief and others who die immediately after their conversion, are appointed to live a longer or shorter period in this world, for the purpose of probation and usefulness. You should be very particular in observing that what

is necessary and all-sufficient to introduce us into a state of salvation, and make us meet for heaven if we thus die, no matter how soon, is not all that is required if our lives be prolonged. There is a very large portion of God's word to be meted out to his saints while dwelling upon earth. The apostolic epistles are full of addresses to them, and you must use and apply them faithfully and wisely. They who by faith have become Christians, must now "live by faith," and see that "their faith groweth exceedingly," that they may thus attain to the "end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls," "holding fast their confidence steadfast unto the end;" they must be "built up in the faith"—must "keep themselves in the love of God." It will be your duty faithfully to deliver to them all those warnings against falling from God, as well as all those precious promises of God's grace and never-failing love, which abound in His word, and which are designed to keep us from "drawing back unto perdition." They must be exhorted to give all diligence to "make their calling and election sure," in the use of appointed means, and the doing all things commanded. You must especially be careful to remember St. Paul's direction to Timothy—"This I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed be careful to maintain good works, for these things are good and profitable unto men." You should clearly understand, and distinctly show to your people, the nature and design of good works; that they are not to bring God in debt to us, but thankfully to show that we are in debt to Him; that they are to be evidences to ourselves and others of the genuineness of our faith; and that they are to react on our faith, and strengthen it, as all inward principles are strengthened, by the exercise of the same in outward acts. All these things you will find abundantly set forth in God's word, and you must deal them out freely to the faithful.

THE SAME SET FORTH IN THE STANDARDS OF OUR CHURCH AND
THE WRITINGS OF HER REFORMERS.

Nor are they less distinctly and emphatically set forth in all the standards of our Church. In all of them you will find that the ordinances and works enjoined are not to justify us, or introduce us into a state of acceptance with God, but to strengthen in us that faith by which we entered, to increase our love, and be evidences to others of the genuineness of our professions.

I shall not detain you by adducing any of the various passages on this subject which abound in the Articles, the Offices, the Homilies of the Church, hoping that you have not only already examined them well, but that you will often recur to them, and adduce them as the interpretation which the Church, without claiming infallibility, puts on that portion of the word of God which is to be divided to his faithful ones upon earth. I may also add, that if you will turn to the writings of those noble reformers who either took part in framing our standards, and who, living at the time or soon after, sustained them in their sermons or other works, you will find a strong confirmation of what is here affirmed to be the doctrine of the Church.

I might enlarge this lecture, by showing that precepts as well as promises, moral duties as well as religious ordinances, gracious dispositions as well as glorious doctrines, should all be, in due degree and at proper times, rightly divided; but as I have already, in a general manner, adverted to them in my last, and shall have occasion to notice them in a more practical way hereafter, I shall omit anything more at present.

LECTURE IX.

ON EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL PREACHING.

THE knowledge of human nature is very important to those who have much to do with men, either in the way of dealing or of government. There is nothing which inspires so much confidence in the judgment of a man, as a conviction that he possesses this knowledge—nothing which so weakens confidence, as a belief that he wants it. How is it to be acquired? Is it by reading books and mingling with men? Some persons are forever reading and have much to do with mankind, yet never obtain it—are always children in this respect. These means alone will not answer, though they are great helps when rightly used. In nothing is this knowledge so important as in regard to the inward man under the operation of religion. How is it to be gained? We must look within, must enter that little world of sin which is within us, and examine it. From what we see within ourselves we may learn what is going on in others. As face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man. My heart showeth me the wickedness of the ungodly, saith David. Massillon, though separate from courts—a mere recluse, exhibits in his sermons a remarkable knowledge of human nature. Preach-

ing on a certain occasion before Louis XIV, and displaying a deep acquaintance with all the vices and follies of man, the king asked how it was possible for one so retired from the world to become thus versed in the corruptions of human nature. Massillon replied at once by laying his hand on his heart, and saying, "this taught me." He spoke of that fountain out of which "all manner of things proceed." Massillon so exposed the sin of others, as to force from the same king, the remark, "I know not how it is, but when I have heard other great preachers, I go away admiring them; but when I hear this man, I go away ashamed of myself." Now, as it is with the vices of human nature, so it is with all the exercises of the soul in religion; a minister who would inspire confidence, and speak a suitable word to the weary, must know how to do it from the experience of his own heart. In the affliction of the body, it is very necessary to our comfort, that there be confidence in the physician to whom we apply for relief. He must not only understand the human frame, and the various diseases preying upon it, but also the nature of that which afflicts us, that he may apply the proper remedy. We prefer our old family physician too, because he knows our peculiar infirmities and how to treat them. The minister of Christ, as the physician of souls, and by the study and knowledge of his own soul and the operation of religious truth thereon, he must know how to understand the case of others and to deal with them. Our Lord not only knew what was in man by a divine discernment, but by the sympathy of a common nature, being in all things tempted like as we are, though without sin. He was a High Priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities—able to succor those that are tempted—else we could not apply to him as to an elder brother, existing in the truth of our mortal nature, going before us in all the trying scenes of mortality. In coming to the saving knowledge of Christ, and the peace which passeth all understand-

ing, and in going on our way to the heavenly Canaan, there are very many painful convictions of sin—many doubts and fears—many clouds overspreading our horizon—much remaining corruption within—many actual transgressions—much languor and coldness, and even unbelief—temptations of the evil one—mourning over our present condition, compared with that of months that are gone by ; so that some are strongly tempted to give up all as lost, or to conclude, either that there is no reality in religion, or that they never possessed it, and never can have it.

How important then to have in the minister, a wise, experienced and sympathising friend, who can not only answer the anxious question of the inquiring soul, “what must I do to be saved,” and direct him to the peace which is in and through Christ ; who can experimentally say, come and hear what God hath done for my soul ; but can also comfort him under all the trials incident to the Christian life. If any persons under distress of mind by reason of first convictions, or subsequent doubts and fears, fail to find an experienced and tenderly sympathising friend in their spiritual guide, they will certainly lose all confidence in him ; and as persons very sick and fearing to die, will, if doubting the skill of the regular physician, send for one more skilful and experienced, so will the soul that is seeking for spiritual comfort and instruction, be disposed to obtain it wherever it can be had. There have been ministers who were not only ignorant and inexperienced touching these things, but altogether unbelieving—disposed to turn them into ridicule, and consider them the workings of a disordered mind. Some have advised not merely exercise of the body, but the pleasures of the world, as the best remedy for these convictions and fears. Some poor souls have followed the advice, but found the prescriptions “miserable comforters,” and even gone back into a state worse than the first. Let me therefore advise you to embrace some early

opportunity after taking charge of a congregation, to preach a sermon on this subject, that you may let them see what are your views, that you may encourage the awakened to come to you for instruction and encouragement, and may let the weak and troubled believer see that you can enter into all his trials and temptations, and that he may come to you as a sympathising friend and wise counsellor. Nothing can raise you more in the estimation of a certain portion of your people, than the assurance thus afforded of your inward experience of true religion.

Some there are who are disposed in a spirit of opposition to other denominations, to undervalue this kind of religion, as they call it, and to assign it over to them. So doing, they have assigned over with it some humble, precious souls, who would have been blessings to our communion. I know a minister, now a most spiritual and successful one, who told me, that after spending three years in the study of divinity, being ordained and taking charge of a parish, he had occasion to write a sermon on justification, for the benefit of a soul inquiring the way of salvation, when to his shame he found he knew not how to answer the anxious question, "what must I do to be saved." It led him to pray and study, and he is now one of those who are "wise to win souls." I trust there is not one present who would be at a loss on this subject. There was one in the Seminary some years since, who on reading to me a clear, well written sermon on the subject, acknowledged that when he first came here, and indeed for some time after, his mind was much perplexed on this point. Mr. Faber's work on justification was the great instrument in God's hand of clearing up his views.

This is a subject of increasing interest and importance at this time, because of some other views introduced from the Church of Rome, by those who are very much disposed to make light of that piety which is a matter of individual

consciousness, through the instrumentality of faith, and in its room would substitute that proof of our acceptance with God which is derived from the being in the true Church, and partaking of the sacraments at the hands of a ministry of apostolic succession.

PRACTICAL PREACHING.

There are those who say that so much emphasis being laid on the preaching of doctrines, and the inward exercises of the soul, interferes with that which is far better, and more according to our Lord's manner, viz., practical preaching; that, according to our Lord, the doers, not the hearers, of the word are justified; that, according to St. John, he that doeth righteousness is born of God; and, according to St. James, that pure religion and undefiled before God, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. It would indeed be a sad mistake in any to bestow too much time on the foundation, to the neglect of the superstructure, or to be ever cleansing and deepening the fountain without taking due pains to draw off the stream, and direct it into the proper channel, or convey it over the fields and meadows to water and fertilize them; but it would be a still greater, to attempt to raise a superstructure without a sufficient foundation, or to expect a pure and fertilizing stream when the fountain is dammed up or unclean. We must be guilty of neither of these things. Both mistakes have been made to the great injury of religion. Our Lord's preaching was eminently practical. His Sermon on the Mount bears witness to this; and yet it was very experimental, being addressed to the very heart, as the first verses of the beatitudes show. The preaching of the apostles was also very practical, though more doctrinal than our Lord's, as He gave them reason to believe it would be, when the Holy Ghost should be poured out upon them in great abundance. St.

James most solemnly warns against any view of faith which interfered with good works—calling it a dead faith—and there was need of such warning even then. Should any suppose that he at all differed from St. Paul, and that his exhibition of faith and works was intended, not as a corrective of the misunderstandings of St. Paul by others, but of the deficiencies of St. Paul himself, let him read the practical conclusions of all St. Paul's epistles, and especially the directions given to Timothy and Titus, as to the manner of preaching. To Timothy he says, "This I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed be careful to maintain good works." Titus, he exhorts to "teach the things which become sound doctrine," and then proceeds to exemplify his meaning by specifying certain virtues to be enjoined. St. Paul, and indeed all the inspired preachers, were very far from the opinion and practice of some who say, only preach the true doctrines of religion and the practice will follow; he who is born again will walk in newness of life, just as certainly and naturally as the living man will breathe, and the stream will flow down its channel; let religion once get into the heart, and the love of all worldly pleasures will be driven out; you need not urge and forbid, for these things will be abandoned of course. To all this we say, scripture and experience are against it. The apostle exhorts Christians to every special duty, as though they might neglect them, and warns against every vice as though they might practice them, exhorts to strive for heaven, as though they might lose it, and warns against hell, as though they might fall into it.

Those who have put on the new man are exhorted to cast off their works of darkness. Even as to theft, they say to the Christian, "Let him that stole, steal no more." And so do they speak, as to everything appertaining to the Christian life and character. The history of Christianity proves the necessity of this. So far from all Christians easily, naturally,

and necessarily doing all good things, and renouncing all evil things, without instruction, warning, and entreaty ; even with all these, they sometimes act so as to bring great reproach on religion, and when not thus addressed, but left to themselves, they do far worse. This is only an excuse for indolent, cowardly, and unfaithful ministers, who do not wish to take trouble, and subject themselves to the odium of censuring particular vices of Christians, and pressing neglected duties. Dearly does the Church pay for such neglect, and the ministers thus failing only bring more trouble and mortification on themselves, and more reproach on the cause of religion.

TESTIMONIES IN FAVOR OF PRACTICAL PREACHING.

Let me place this subject before you in the language of the wise and experienced. "The gospel," says Mr. Bridges, "may be preached in all the accuracy of doctrinal statement, and in all the richness of experimental comfort, and yet may be only as 'a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice.' " The practical detail of its obligations and fruits is often a ground of offence, where its doctrinal expositions have been listened to with interest, and even its spiritual enjoyments been tasted with self-delusive delight. It is more easy to deal with a darkened understanding and with excited feelings, than with a corrupt will.

If the work of the ministry were to end with the understanding and affections, without any corresponding practical obligations, the message would be far less offensive to the natural heart. But the Christian minister will feel that the declaration of all the counsel of God would be as incomplete without a direct and detailed enforcement of practical obligations, as if all reference to doctrine and experience were totally omitted. Let then these departments of preaching be exhibited in their mutual connection, dependence, and use, and then the head, the heart and life, will be simultaneously

influenced. The apostolical system of practical preaching was to connect all relative duties with the doctrine of Christ. Bishop Horsley's testimony is most decisive on this point. The practice of religion will always thrive in proportion as its doctrines are well understood and generally received, and the practice will degenerate and decay in proportion as the doctrine is misunderstood and neglected. It is true, therefore, that it is the great duty of the preacher of the gospel to press the practice of its precepts upon the consciences of men. But then it is equally true that it is his duty to enforce this duty in a particular way, namely, by enforcing its doctrines. The motives which the revealed doctrines furnish are the only motives he has to deal with, and the only motives by which religious duty can be effectually enforced. Bishop Horne also has well observed, "To preach practical sermons, that is, sermons upon virtues and vices, without inculcating those great scripture doctrines of redemption and grace which alone can incite and enable us to forsake sin, and follow holiness; what is it but to put together the wheels and set the hands of a watch, forgetting the spring which is to make them all go?" And again, "One thing we do affirm, because we can prove it from scripture, that whoever preaches and enforces moral virtues, without justification and sanctification preceding, may as well declaim upon the advantages of walking to a man that can neither stir hand or foot. Let the declamation be ever so elegant, St. Peter's plain address would be worth ten thousand of them to a cripple, 'In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.'" Again he says, in answer to the charge of neglecting moral duties, "How we can be said to deny the existence of moral duties, because we preach faith, I know not, unless he that plants a vine does, by that action, deny the existence of grapes. The fruit receives its goodness from the tree, not the tree from the fruit, which does not make the tree good but shows it to be so. So works receive all

their goodness from faith, not faith from works, which do not themselves justify, but show a prior justification of the soul that produces them." "The scripture preaching of the gospel," says Mr. Bridges, "should lead us to preach doctrines practically and practise doctrinally, omitting neither, nor stating either independent of the other, or unconnected with their influence upon experimental piety." As to those who think it enough to set forth the doctrines, he asks, "Were not the doctrines of the gospel as powerful in the hands of the apostles as in our own? Yet they did not leave the tree to grow of itself, and put forth its leaves, and bear fruit, without active care and nurture. Who so minute in his detail of practical duties as St. Paul, the one who is most full in his statements of evangelical doctrine." In speaking of the effect of separating these things in our preaching, he justly remarks, "The effect of this semi-evangelical ministry will be found in a luxuriant crop of stony-ground hearers—full of notions—excited in their feelings—forward in their profession—but unsubdued in their tempers and habits—equally destitute of the root—of the perseverance—the life—activity—fruitfulness and enjoyment of the spiritual principle. Nor is this tone of ministry less hurtful to the sincere professor of the gospel. The knowledge that puffieth up will be often substituted for the charity that edifieth, and a low and imperfect standard of holiness will be illustrated by a clouded and uncertain exhibition of the spirit of the gospel." In accordance with the above are the sentiments of Mr. Scott, the commentator, whose estimate of the power and value of christian doctrine was very high. Speaking of the necessity of practical as well as doctrinal preaching, he says, "A superficial gospel will almost always make more rapid progress than the whole truth of revelation solidly proposed to mankind, (except at such seasons as that which followed the day of Pentecost,) but then these superficial effects soon die away, and gradually

come to little, whereas the less apparent effect of the whole truth abides and increases permanently." There is an anecdote told by himself, illustrating the foregoing statement. Being called to minister for a time at some place where the gospel had been thus imperfectly preached, and this superficial impression been made on the minds of the hearers, he commenced a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which, while he was laying the foundation in the doctrines of grace, they listened gladly, but when he came to the words, "see that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," and began to press the duty of holiness and good works, immediately many were offended and came no more to his lectures. In the life and letters of Mr. Scott there are many warnings against this defect.

I conclude with a testimony from the excellent treatise of Mr. Jennings, on preaching Christ. "If a preacher," he says, "insists upon even the peculiar and glorious truths of the gospel, but so unhappily manages them as not to lead people to holiness, and the imitation of Christ thereby, what is this to the full and grand purpose of preaching, or of the ultimate design of the gospel. Such preachers are quite off that divine system which is calculated to destroy the works of the devil, and to teach men sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. It is not only Christ without us that we are to preach, but also Christ in us, and our putting on Christ by an holy heart and life. If the Apostle James were to come again, and to make a visitation to our churches, and hear such a preacher, he would imagine himself among such a people as he writes against in his epistle. He would be apt when the minister had done, in his zeal for Christ to take the text in hand again, and supply what the preacher had omitted, that is, the application, and to say to the auditors "know ye not that faith without works is dead." If the preacher should here interrupt him, saying, hold, spare your pains, the Spirit

of God will make the application and lead men to holiness ; would not James reply, I and the rest of the apostles were taught to preach otherwise, and to give particular exhortation to duty ; we judged that we might as well leave it to the Spirit without our pains to reveal the doctrine, as to instruct men in the practice of the gospel.”

Those who adopt the evangelical system cannot be too careful to avoid even seeming to neglect this practical preaching, for there are those who think that this defect belongs to the system, and that by making good works follow after faith, we are apt to neglect them altogether, and not make them so necessary a part of religion as the sacred writers do. Let us show that we do consider them as a component part, though second in the order of time, as the stream is to the fountain, and the fruit to the tree. Let it be seen that more and better works by far proceed from gratitude for the love of God in Christ, than from the endeavor to merit his love. Ours it is to love Him, because He first loved us ; and because He has so loved us, we must love one another. Any other order than this, is not the order established by God, and the introduction of it makes another gospel than that which Christ and his apostles delivered unto us.

LECTURE X.

ON FAITHFULNESS IN PREACHING.

It was prophesied of our Lord, "that faithfulness should be the girdle of his loins." A girdle whether for grace or usefulness was a most important part of the dress of the ancients. It not only braced the whole body, but bound and pressed together in the right place all other parts of raiment, which but for this would have hung loosely, been inconvenient, and blown about by every wind. In this respect, as in others, Christ's ministers should be like Him—be faithful. "It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." Timothy was directed to "commit the gospel ministry to faithful men," to such as would speak the word of God with all boldness—not fearing the faces of men, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but commending themselves to the consciences of all men by the manifestation of the truth; able to say, we are pure from the blood of all men, having not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. Fidelity in the declaration of the truth; putting a difference between the holy and unholy; warning the wicked of his wickedness and the end thereof; teaching the good and the right way; speaking the words of God whether they would hear or forbear, is made the very con-

dition of our own salvation, when the Lord shall come to judgment, and judgment shall begin at the house of God. Of Zadoc, God said, "I will raise me up a faithful priest who shall do according to all that is in my mind and in my heart." To that God we should all look, to raise up in each of us a faithful man," for God giveth not the spirit of fear, but of power and of a sound mind. We must not use flattering words, nor of men seek praise, nor fear their frowns, else God may confound us before them. Although at times, if a man be prudent and wise, as well as faithful, God will make even his enemies to be at peace with him; yet we should remember the woe denounced against those of whom all men speak well; for it will be the case with some, that out of the enmity of their hearts towards the truth, they will say of the faithful preacher as an evil king once said of a faithful prophet, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." The fear of losing the good feeling of men towards us, is a great snare to some ministers of amiable and timid dispositions, who think that by kindness, and even by flattering words, they can disarm all this enmity, and the more effectually win them over to religion. But it is a vain attempt. The God of love himself, in giving us his pure and blessed law, cannot do us good without awakening the enmity of the heart, and thus showing us our awful apostacy from heaven. Our blessed Lord, meek, and lowly, and tender, and loving as he was, and avoiding all needless occasions of offence, yet brought upon himself and his doctrine the worst feelings of our depraved nature. "They hated me," he said, "without a cause." Even Socrates understood human nature better than some ministers seem to do, for he prophesied that if a perfectly virtuous and holy man were to come upon earth, and preach and live the perfection of virtue, men would hate him, and at length put him to death. The faithful pastor then must venture the painful consequences of speaking the

truth, must set his face as flint ; must know that he shall not be ashamed, for One is near that justifieth ; must not fear the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. The command of God is upon him, "he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully."

TESTIMONIES IN FAVOR OF IT.

"To preach the whole counsel of God," says the Bishop of Winchester, "will possibly shake the love of those whose affections are drawn out to him as a friend, but not as a Christian pastor, who watches over their souls, and must give account. Ministers, however, sometimes draw back from a conflict of this kind, or endeavor to soften it down to something that is less painful : they touch with the utmost tenderness ; and, if the patient shrinks, they will touch no more. The gospel is preached in this way, till all the people agree with the preacher, that he gives no offence, and does no good." This is a temptation which will press more heavily on some tempers than on others. It has been called, the snare of keeping on good terms with those who respect us. Even such a decided and resolute man as Thomas Scott felt its power. "Here," he says, "I feel my own deficiency as much or more than in any other respect. I often feel an inward timidity when about to preach an unpopular doctrine, or expose a foible which some one of my congregation, whom I otherwise love and esteem, is remarkable for. In every instance I feel the greatest reluctance to resign the good opinion, or act contrary to the judgment, of those for whom I have an esteem." By the grace of God, however, he held fast his integrity. Not so with some. Witness poor Dr. Dodd, who, from one compliance after another, at length became a complete man of the world ; was seen on the race-field, near Paris, with Mr. Fox ; involved himself in debt ; forged an order for a large sum of money, and was publicly executed, in the presence of thousands who had

listened to his eloquence at a time when he was eminent among the preachers of London. The fear of man was his snare. "I myself," said the Rev. Mr. Venn, "heard him tell his own congregation, when he was lecturing in his house, that he was obliged to give up that method of helping their souls, because it exposed him to so much reproach. He gave it up, and, after a time, joined them at their houses in card parties, and then went with them to the theatre; and at last they followed him to the scaffold." This, then, is a virtue or grace which should be cultivated by the Christian minister; for, since the days of Peter, who denied our Lord when he little thought to have been surprised into it, to the present time, there have been great temptations to a cowardly neglect of duty.

Let us now consider how our faithfulness is to be applied in the ministry of the gospel.

In the first place, we must, in the strong language of scripture, set forth the deep depravity of human nature in every individual, without exception, from his first coming into the world; so that there must be a radical change of our nature by the Holy Ghost, in order to please God here, and be admitted to his kingdom hereafter. There must be no softening of this picture, by reference to any of those amiable instincts which we have one towards another, in common with other animals, but which look not to heaven. We must state, in the decisive language of our Articles, that "we are very far gone—*quam longissime*—from original righteousness; that there is and can be nothing acceptable to God in any works done before the faith of Christ and inspiration of the Holy Ghost." Of course, we must speak not only in terms of strong condemnation of those works of darkness which mark the doers as children of the devil, but pronounce as null and void all those good deeds, as men call them, which have not the Spirit for their author, and heaven for their end. We must, in the most

solemn, affecting, yet decisive and undoubting manner and language, declare, from God, that all unholy persons must have their portion in the ever-burning lake—must be banished, with everlasting destruction, from the presence of God. We must declare, that not those whom all acknowledge to be wicked must be turned into hell, but all those who forget God. On these points we must lift up our voice like a trumpet, and our trumpet utter no uncertain sound. To hesitate ; to speak softly or doubtfully, as if we scarcely believed what we said ; to lay aside the plain language of God's word for some softened words of our own, lest we offend the taste or delicate ears of some ; is treachery, is cruelty, is a base cowardice, which deserves the fate which it forbears to warn others of. Without intending to be unfaithful, or without having any doubt as to the dreadful end of the wicked, there are some who do not present future punishments with the frequency and solemnity which they demand. I know that there are some ignorant and violent declaimers, who speak of hell fire in such a manner as to disgust even the faithful ; and this has brought the very language of scripture, and practice of our Lord and the apostles, into disrepute. I do not recommend to your imitation the coarse, unfeeling manner of such persons, but rather the pathetic tenderness of Christ and the apostles.

In the next place, let me commend fidelity in making that plain and broad distinction which scripture establishes between the two great classes into which all men are divided, as I have shown in another lecture. If the scriptures be true, then every one in the congregation must be, at whatever time the preacher addresses them, in a state of acceptance or condemnation. The minister, believing this, must of course, if faithful, address them accordingly, putting a difference between the holy and unholy, rightly dividing the word of truth, its promises and threatenings, between them. He must be most careful to

avoid a style of address which may only seem to confound them together. They may seem to be drawing nearer and nearer to the line beyond which lies salvation, but they are and must be on the one side or on the other, and should be addressed accordingly. A proper regard to this is one reason why some are so much more successful in winning souls to Christ than others.

In the third place, it may be proper to allude to a question of increasing importance in our Church, by reason of recent discussions, and of the ground some are disposed to take. The settlement of it has nothing to do with the subject in hand, and must affect our mode of considering and addressing a congregation. There are those who think that in baptism, original sin is not only washed away, in the sense of being pardoned, or having pardon sealed to us ; in other words, that baptism is a sign or assurance from God that he accepts of Christ's death and atonement for the child, so that its evil nature shall not be its condemnation, should it die, but that the evil nature is removed, and a new nature substituted, answering to what we understand by conversion, or renewal in adults. They believe that as adult converts may sin and fall away so as to be even finally lost, so these little ones may fall away from grace received, and even lose their new nature altogether. Of course, as they would exhort adult converts not to fall away at all, but to hold fast their integrity, or when they fall to rise again, but not to be converted again, so they would exhort these little ones, as they grow up, not to seek a new heart or nature, but to cherish that which they received in baptism, to repent of any departures from it, or decays of it, but never for a moment to suppose that they have not been born again, or that they can indeed be born again, after baptism. Now it is evident that there is a great difference between these two systems. It is the difference between radical change of nature or character, and a mere reformation of some things which have be-

come perverted. It is very important to understand which of the two is true, for if a radical change, notwithstanding baptism, is necessary ; if baptism be only a sign thereof, and a means leading thereto through other means ; then to address the baptized as not needing it, as having already enjoyed it, and as only recognizing a partial repentance in some, and in others none at all, may be the means of deceiving some to their perdition ; for our Lord says, "except a man be born again, he cannot see God." Now the prevailing sentiment in the Church is, that the regeneration ascribed to baptism, is not the imparting of a new nature superseding conversion, but the pledge and assurance of religious privileges, and the promise of the Spirit, by which we may obtain the new nature as our faculties and affections open and mature. There ought to be very sufficient evidences of the truth of the other hypothesis before we proceed to act upon it and regulate our whole system of religious teaching by it. One would naturally suppose that if it be true, then there would be generally at an early age some symptoms of this new birth in those who had been baptized in infancy ; that these would especially appear, when a comparison was instituted between baptized children, and the numbers of unbaptized ones in our land. Of this fact, however, there are no sufficient proofs. In the case of those many children, who from the age of three or four years, to ten or twelve, are baptized on the faith of parents and friends, we might surely expect some immediate evidences of new birth unto righteousness, if consisting in a change of heart and nature, because these young ones are so far moral agents, that we sometimes perceive the effect of advice, of correction, of affliction, etc., on their tempers and conduct. But will any one say, that there is in these the proof of a moral effect in baptism such as is fully exhibited in the conversion of adults. We are well persuaded that the adoption of this system would again lead, as in the Romish

Church, to a general lowering of the standard of true piety, to the distinction between mortal and venial sins—the latter being perfectly consistent with our new baptismal birth, and scarce any sin at all—the former being such a loss of our new nature, that penance and purgatory will be required for its purification. We believe that if it be adopted, the qualifications for Confirmation and the Eucharist will be again reduced to a mere knowledge of the Creed and Catechism in its letter, and a certain outward decency of conduct, which seems to say that we have not lost our baptismal grace, and therefore have a right to seek more grace in these appointed rites. As for the plea put in for this new birth in Baptism, that it seems to make children more the objects of the pious nursing care of the Church, seeing that they are God's children in the highest spiritual sense, though in danger of being drawn away by the temptation and corruption of the world, the flesh, and the devil; I do not see why the Church, her ministers, and parents, should not feel at least as much solicitude to have a new nature created within them, as to retain the one supposed to be already there. We believe on our scheme that Christ died for them; that the sin of Adam will not be their condemnation; that the promise is to them as children of God's Church; that in baptism they are renewedly and most impressively assured of all needful help; that they already have the capacity of being born again of the Spirit and word of God; and that it is the most solemn duty of all having to do with them, to apply the appointed means of their new birth. We see no consideration urging those embracing the other scheme, to endeavor to retain the supposed holiness of the baptized, which should not also more powerfully stimulate those of the other opinion to endeavor to obtain the new nature for them; and we see this great difference, that a mistake on the one side is far more dangerous than a mistake on the other. Is it not worthy of inquiry whether the belief,

that in a single moment, and by the act of baptism, an infant of a few days or weeks is completely restored to the righteousness of Adam, so as henceforth only to be required to preserve his baptismal purity, or if losing some of it, to regain the same, is not actually liable to some of the most serious objections to which the denial of original sin is subject, and will not greatly change our treatment of the child as to its moral and religious discipline. If it be true, then baptized and unbaptized children are very different beings as to the inward man; just as different as converted and unconverted adults are on the other system, and must require different treatment. Take an illustration of this. Whether a soil of this earth be originally good, or from being barren, in a moment, as by magic, is made good, matters not with the cultivator, who in both instances has only to keep it good. But if it be an evil soil, which by God's blessing, or industry, may become good, it is evident that the husbandman has much more to do, and that if he should mistake and treat this evil soil as if it were good, the result would be most disastrous. On this subject let me particularly request that you carefully study the Homilies of our Church. In vain do you search through these honest sermons for any recognition of a baptismal purity in one human being which supersedes the necessity for the most deep and heartfelt penitence.

TRUE AND FALSE PROFESSORS.

This brings me to another instance in which ministerial faithfulness should be displayed—that is, in distinguishing between true and false professors.

To question the sincerity and reality of the piety of any who publicly profess it, and are enrolled as regular members of the Church, is a task requiring at the same time, great firmness and faithfulness, and great wisdom. But it must be done, not merely in the case of those whose misconduct sub-

jects them to public censure and the discipline of the Church, but in regard to some whose outward conduct exempts them from this. God's word is plain on this subject. It speaks of sinners in Zion—those who are at ease in Zion—those who have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof—who have a name to live, yet are dead—clouds without water—tares among the wheat, so resembling it, as not to be separated by man. Now we are as much bound to set forth the fact of such persons being obnoxious to God's wrath, as we are, the fact of notoriously wicked persons being obnoxious to the same. We should do it by adducing such scriptures as I have quoted, and also by showing the marks of false professors from God's word. They must be faithfully warned of the end of their hollow, heartless profession, and told that God will cast them out of his mouth. False professors should not be allowed to remain at ease within the Church, either on their own account, or the account of others, for they will gladly draw others into a false profession to be companions of their formality and worldliness.

The courage and wisdom for this work must come from God in answer to faithful, importunate prayer ; and he who put a parable into the mouth of Nathan the Prophet, with which to melt the heart of David, and gave him firmness to say, "thou art the man," will teach us how best to rebuke even a genuine professor, for this also must sometimes be done, and then the heart will be ready to break, as the heart of the Apostle when his children sinned. But faithful are the wounds of a friend ; for though the Apostle was sorrowful when he had to do it, his sorrow was turned into joy when he saw the wholesome effects of it.

LECTURE XI.

ON AFFECTIONATE EARNESTNESS AND PARTICULARITY IN PREACHING.

HAVING spoken of the substance of your preaching, and the wisdom and fidelity with which the word is to be dealt out, let me now say something as to the manner, still connecting it with, and drawing it from the heart.

Sacred eloquence is not to be despised. It should be carefully cultivated to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Great elegance and sublimity of style, and an overpowering delivery are not to be attained by all. All cannot be great reasoners, or very learned divines, but all who ought to be in the ministry, if they will only take due pains, and consult their own peculiar talents, may learn to preach so as to edify.

I am now about to speak of that earnest, affectionate, tender manner of addressing our fellow creatures, which becomes the truths delivered, and those who are sent to deliver them.

Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty man.

Much impressed himself,
And mainly anxious that the flock he feeds
May feel it too."

Such is the orator I would have you seek to be, and such each one can be without great natural powers. *Poeta nascitur, Orator fit*, is especially true of the Christian preacher, for God greatly assists him by pouring love into his heart. And if there be truth in the sentiment, that the subject often makes the orator, and if there be any inspiration in a theme, the preacher has great advantages.

DECISION NECESSARY.

In order to this affectionate earnestness, there is one thing very necessary—I mean decision of mind as to all the great truths of religion. Indecision, on all subjects, and in all pursuits, is fatal to much success. The halting, wavering, and double-minded find no favor with God or men. Their speech is hesitating, feeble, unimpressive, and their conduct usually corresponds. The language of scripture is the very reverse of this, and we should use it, well persuaded of its entire truth. Let me show what I mean by this decision. On some points of doctrine good men may differ, and have differed, but on the great fundamentals there must be no hesitation. For instance, when in the words of God we say to our fellow-sinners, “the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that there is none righteous—no, not one—that except all repent they must perish—that without shedding of blood is no remission of sins—that there is not another name under heaven but that of Christ whereby we can be saved—that without holiness no man shall see the Lord—that except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven—that we are saved by grace through faith—not of works—lest any man should boast;”—I say when we repeat such strong, expressive language, on such all-important subjects, we must verily believe and feel the truths they set forth; we must speak in tone and manner evincive of this, showing that we have not the least doubt of these things. Knowing the

terror of the Lord we must persuade men. Verily believing that they are going to perdition, we must pathetically say to them, "Why will ye die." Convinced that what we say is in truth not the word of man but the word of God, we must just place ourselves in the room of the apostles, who had both seen and heard our Lord, both before and after his death and resurrection, and speak with all their decision and earnestness.

There is great force in the reply of Garrick to one who asked him how it was that he and others on the stage spoke things which they knew to be false in so impressive a manner, while ministers of religion spoke what they knew to be true, and infinitely important, so as to effect so little. "We utter fiction," he said, "as though it were truth, and you utter truth as though it were fiction." And if we thus speak, from a conviction of the truth of what we utter, we shall scarce say anything that will offend. There is a blessed truth in the maxim, "*Dilige et dic quod, cunque voles.*" On this subject I shall content myself with one quotation from amongst the most perfect of pulpit orators, the celebrated Robert Hall. "In the most awful denunciation of the divine displeasure, an air of unaffected tenderness should be preserved; that while with unsparing fidelity we declare the whole counsel of God, it may appear that we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burthen of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, it will be when delivered with a trembling hand and faltering lips; and we may then expect them to realize its solemn import, when they perceive that we sink under it. "Of whom I told you before," said St. Paul, "and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." What force does that affecting declaration

derive from these tears? An affectionate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments, and follow the impulses of the preacher. Whoever attends to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of this impression depends on this quality, which gives to sentiments comparatively trite a power over the mind beyond what the most striking and original conceptions have without it." "*Si vis me flere flendum est primum tibi ipsi.*"

He that has this tender heart can scarce be otherwise than interesting in speaking on such themes as belong to the sacred pulpit.

PARTICULARITY OF ADDRESS.

I now proceed to speak of that particularity of preaching which brings home the subject in hand to every one, in opposition to that generalizing manner of treating subjects which arrests the attention of none. This is one of the most delicate, difficult, and yet most important and effective of all the parts of pulpit duty. To be able, by some parable or previous address, to soften the heart of a David, so as to say, "*Thou art the man,*" without so offending as to fail of the object, is the very perfection of the preacher's art. The Bishop of Winchester well remarks, "That this particularity of individual application is peculiar to Christianity. Its deficiency is very perceptible in all that is left us of heathen moralists. There is nothing in them which steps out of the broad line of generalities, and brings the system home to the heart of the individual in particular. The same is in a great degree true of the Jewish system. But the plain literalities of Christ's precepts were such that no class of persons could complain that they were overlooked in the general system." He quotes from Mr. Venn the following sentiment. "The total inefficacy of the common strain of preaching I ascribe in part to

its being too studied, and too general. I have several shepherds and shepherdesses who attend my preaching, and when I am proving that a shepherd or his boy, though he cannot read a word, is not at all further removed from the knowledge and delightful enjoyments of God, than a scholar or a gentleman, they seem struck with the glad tidings, when I prove this to them by the instance of the poor shepherds of Bethlehem."

"A minister," says Professor Porter, "may make a broad statement that all men are sinners, and do it clearly. None of his hearers may dispute it, and yet not one apply it to his own character. The sermon may go further, and divide the hearers into two classes, saints and sinners, and yet none be led to make the solemn inquiry, to which of these classes do I belong? A single color of the painter spread indiscriminately over the canvass may be very proper for certain purposes—as the ground of the picture for instance—but it is not the likeness of any one; so the sermon which deals in generalities, without any exact delineation of character, awakens no vivid interest. How different was the preaching of Rowland Hill. A gentleman went to his chapel in London, and being unable to get in for the crowd, listened to his sermon through the window, and said that he felt but one predominant impression during the whole—namely, he preaches to me. Mr. Hill was distinguished for seizing on some prominent point of religious truth, holding it up in a clear light, steadily fixing it in the minds of his hearers, and then applying it to their consciences. Whitfield was such a preacher also. Is he preaching on the omnipresence of God. He so applies it that the one all-absorbing thought of every mind is "God sees me." The thief who says surely the darkness shall cover me, trembles when he comes to think of that omnipresent Being which beheld the guilty deed. The man who defrauded his neighbor by direct falsehood or skilful deception, the hypocrite who

assumed the mask of religion to further his purposes of iniquity, the votary of avarice, ambition, or sensuality, who supposed that the lurking abominations of his heart were known only to himself, each of these, as the preacher goes on to exhibit an omnipresent, heart-searching God, finds himself stripped of all disguise, and standing naked amid the all-pervading light of truth."

Under a sermon thus conducted, every hearer that has a conscience, feels the hand of the preacher pressing heavily on himself. But how easily might it be so managed as to be an uninteresting discussion of a general abstract truth.

Rightly to divide the word of truth is a most important duty to him who "would be approved of God"—"a workman who needeth not to be ashamed." It is a skill worth studying, and laboring to obtain. Our success and the good of souls very much depends on it. As I have said before, sermons should not be like letters put into the post-office, without a direction. Our Lord was an example of discriminating preaching. The woman of Samaria said, "Come see a man who told me all that ever I did." Those at Nazareth were filled with wrath at his sermon; and the Jews, on account of the parable of the vineyard, were angry, for they perceived he had spoken the parable against them, although he did not name them.

PARTICULARITY NOT TO BE CONFOUNDED WITH HARSHNESS.

But now, my young friends, it is proper here to warn you against confounding personality and harshness with particularity and fidelity.

As there are individuals who value themselves for speaking out all their minds among their friends and acquaintances on every subject, and call it candor, perhaps sincerity, (though it better deserves the name of rudeness and folly,) so there are ministers who greatly mistake on the subject we have in hand,

and sometimes do great injury. "A wise man's heart," saith Solomon, "discerneth both time and judgment." Under the pretext of declaring the whole counsel of God, and keeping back nothing that is profitable, a disgust has often been excited, the effect of which has been a bar to all future usefulness. It is a great grace not to mistake in this matter, so as to do nothing out of reason. John Newton says, "A violent opposition against ministers and professors of the gospel is sometimes expressed by the devil roaring, and some think no good can be done without it. It is allowed that men who love darkness will sometimes show their dislike of the light; but I believe, if the meekness and wisdom of the friends of the gospel had always been equal to their good intentions and zeal, the devil would not have had opportunity of roaring so loud as he has sometimes done." The subject matter of the gospel is offence enough to the carnal: we must, therefore, expect opposition; but we need not provoke or despise it, or do anything to aggravate it. Baxter's experience led him, in his latter days, to the same sentiment: "I have perceived that nothing so much hinders the reception of the truth as urging it upon men with too harsh importunity, and falling too heavily on their errors; for hereby you engage their honor in the business, and they defend their errors as themselves, and stir up all their wit and ability to oppose you." Henry Martyn acknowledges that he made a great mistake of this kind, soon after his ordination, when on board the vessel which carried him to the East, and where he imprudently assailed the vices of the crew and preached too harshly. Joseph Wolf utterly despised all kinds of prudence. I heard him say publicly, that he never practised it but once, and then repented of it. But he is an eccentric genius, whose path is not to be followed. St. Paul was a different man. He exhorted the Corinthians to give none offence, either to the Jews or Gentiles, or to the Church of God, even as he himself pleased all men in all

things; yet he never sacrificed truth and duty to policy. Mr. Cecil says, with his usual point and sagacity: "It is a foolish project to avoid giving offence; but it is our duty to avoid giving unnecessary offence. It is necessary offence if it is given by the truth; but it is unnecessary if our own spirit occasion it."

PRUDENCE IN ADMINISTERING REPROOF.

It is especially necessary to observe prudence in administering reproof in public. There are some persons who will receive almost any advice or reproof in private, but if even a third person be present they will not bear it. Such, I have been told, was the case even with the irritable John Randolph. He would suffer contradiction, difference of sentiment, even rebuke, with comparative patience; but if a third person were present, he would endure nothing from his best friend. Ministers ought ever to remember this peculiarity of human nature, and not provoke it unnecessarily. Although there is a time, as the apostle says, when those who sin openly must be rebuked openly and sharply, we must see and not misjudge the case or time. Seldom do ministers from the pulpit notice any individual misconduct in the congregation without some excitement, which seems like temper or passion, and that spoils everything. If they cannot do it very mildly, very discreetly and wisely, they should let it alone till some other time.*

* There is a difficulty in administering rebuke so as to avoid the appearance of excitement, from the fact that the minister is usually speaking in a high tone either from the desk or the pulpit when he is called upon to do it, and he cannot easily lower his tone. This ought to make him the more careful how he undertakes, and how he executes it. It is peculiarly distressing when a minister has to complain of the cries of little children in church, and to request their withdrawal. When it is harshly done, it seems so contrary to our Lord's manner towards them. In country churches, ministers should be very careful of rebuking for this, as it often happens that the mothers must either run this risk, or not come to church at all. When it does occur, too, they generally suffer enough without such public exposure; although there be some instances of too great indifference to the comfort of the minister and congregation.

They may let it be seen that they are distressed by it, and then the congregation will sympathise with them ; but let them take care how they try to show their valiantness in that way. Bishop Taylor says, "In the reproof of sin, be as particular as you please, and spare no man's sin ; but meddle with no man's person, neither name any man, nor signify him, nor make him to be respected. He that doeth otherwise maketh his sermon a libel, and the ministry of repentance an instrument of revenge ; and in so doing, he shall exasperate the man, but never amend the sinner." It is a mark of no ordinary judgment to know when to reprove and rebuke. It often happens that zeal in this respect hurries men into rashness, or that caution degenerates into timidity or indifference. "Our Lord," says the Bishop of Winchester, "stands as a beacon between the two extremes, equally removed from intemperate warmth on the one hand, and from rashness on the other. The corrupt state of the Jewish Church at the time of our Lord's advent required great faithfulness in pointing out, and firmness in correcting, abuses ; yet it appears that, notwithstanding the general corruption which prevailed, no individual is held up to reprobation by name throughout the discourses recorded in the gospels—Herod alone excepted. The scribes and pharisees are rebuked with the greatest severity collectively. The rich are warned, as a class, of the difficulty with which they would enter the kingdom of heaven. The cities wherein his mighty works were done are upbraided, because they repented not ; but there is a systematic forbearance with regard to particular persons, which it is impossible should have been the result of accident. It is vice which is stigmatized, but rarely the vicious person. It is the sect, but not the component members, which is exposed and held up to shame. It is Chorazin or Bethsaida, Capernaum or Jerusalem, and not their individual citizens, who are singled out and specified ; the generation at large, and not

a part, which is reproached with unbelief, or mourned over because of its obduracy. Once, when His disciples seemed to have drawn unfavorable conclusions respecting the religious state of those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, He showed His dislike of personality by turning their minds from an uncharitable and fruitless speculation to a moral of immediate practical utility—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." If this forbearance be compared with the freedom with which Christ singled out objects for praise, the difference will appear so striking, that it could not have arisen undesignedly. Of the centurion, whose servant He had healed, He said, "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel." To the woman who had touched the hem of his garment, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Of John the Baptist he said, "Of them that are born of woman, there hath not arisen a greater." Of the woman who had anointed Him, "She hath wrought a good work in me." Of one of the scribes, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." Of the poor widow, "She hath cast in more than they all." Of Nathaniel, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." It appears that our Lord never hesitated to give personal praise, (when it was due,) however systematically he refrained from personal blame. And yet so faithful was He, that even His adversaries acknowledged, "Thou carest not for any man, neither regardest the persons of men."

A POSITIVE, AUTHORITATIVE MANNER TO BE AVOIDED.

Let me conclude this lecture, by begging you to remember, that anything like a positive, authoritative, consequential manner, is peculiarly unbecoming in young ministers, whether it proceed from some high estimation of themselves, or their office. While St. Paul exhorted Timothy so to act that none might despise his youth, he bids him also in rebuking the elders of the congregation, to entreat them as fathers. When

ministers have grown grey in a parish, they may then speak more as old men, but even then it should be rather the language of old St. John, in his epistle, than that of some who have just entered on the work, and think they must magnify their office by assuming more than apostolic authority of speech.

LECTURE XII.

ON PLAINNESS OF STYLE. ON READING SERMONS OR
EXTEMPORIZING. ON THE DELIVERY AND LENGTH
OF SERMONS.

WHEN we remember how it is prophesied in the Old Testament that the highway to heaven shall be so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein; and that in the New, it is so emphatically said, that "to the poor the gospel is preached," we may thereby know that the language of religion is a plain language. There may be some passages in the scriptures hard to be understood, and liable to be wrested to damnation; but then only the unlearned and unstable will dwell on such passages, they being so few, and those which are plain, so many. In regard to style, as well as matter, the preacher should speak as the oracles of God, often using the very words of the Holy Ghost, which are the plainest and most impressive of all words. A greater master of eloquence there cannot be, than our blessed Lord, whose great excellence seems to have been to make great truths understood by the meanest capacity. Wherefore we find that the common people heard him gladly. The Church of England, and her daughter in America, have, I fear, been

most guilty towards the poor in this respect. The practice of writing sermons is, perhaps, liable to this objection. We smooth and polish them until at length they have no part about them that will strike so as to wound. "A writer of sermons has no idea," said Mr. Cecil, "how many words he uses to which the common people either affix no meaning, or a false one." Luther says, "we ought to direct ourselves in preaching according to the condition of our hearers; but all preachers commonly fail herein, preaching that which little edifieth plain simple people." He says, that on a certain occasion when he and Melancthon were at Marburg, Bucer and Zuinglius came there and preached in all state and curious manner—as if to bear the bell away—as if to say—behold Luther and Melancthon, what learned fellows we are." This is the great snare to the souls of ministers. They wish to be regarded somewhat as gods come down in the likeness of men, but they should remember how this flattery distressed Paul and Barnabas, and how, because it pleased Herod, he was devoured of worms. An eminent divine once preached what he considered a great sermon, before the Lord Mayor of London, but on coming down from the pulpit a poor man pulled him by the sleeve and said, "Sir, I have not understood one word that you said." What poor man ever said this to our Lord? A lady once said, that some preachers spoke Latin in English. St. Paul said, "in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." If, it be entirely against the letter of the law of the Church to read the service in an unknown tongue, it is surely against the spirit of it to preach in a language unintelligible to the plainest people. It may really be said of some preachers, whose sermons are above their hearers, as St. Paul said of unknown tongues, "So likewise, except ye utter with the tongue words easy to be understood,

how shall it be known what is spoken, for ye shall speak unto the air." The hearer might well say with St. Paul, "Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." And as St. Paul exhorted those who spake in unknown tongues in proof of their inspiration, to pray also that they might interpret, so indeed might we exhort those who think that they must use high language and scientific allusions, such as are not in scripture, that they would also interpret, or explain them, for the benefit of the unlearned and the young. As to the composition of sermons, Dr. Doddridge says, "I am not without my fears that a great deal of useful time is lost by an over artful composition of sermons, and in giving them such a polish and ornament as does not conduce to their usefulness, nor any way balance the labor bestowed on the work. If we do not diligently watch over our hearts, this will be an incense offered to our vanity, which will render the sacrifice less acceptable to God, however we and our hearers may be delighted with the perfume. All that are not children in understanding, know that there is a natural and manly kind of eloquence, arising from the deep sense of the subject and an ardent love of souls, which is of all others the most to be desired and esteemed." In order to be really understood, not only our general style of thought and expression should be plain and strong, but we should be careful to avoid all words not easily understood, as one word may obscure a whole sentence, and that sentence the whole argument. Dean Swift, in his letter to a young clergyman, recommending plain words, says, "I believe the method observed by Lord Falkland in some of his writings would not be an ill one for divines. I was assured by an old person of quality who knew him well, that when he doubted whether a word was intelligible or not, he used to consult one of his lady's chamber maids—not his waiting woman, he

says, for it is possible she may have been conversant in romances—and by her judgment was decided whether to receive it or not.” The Dean adds a remark worthy of serious consideration. “I know not how it comes to pass, that professors in most arts and sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain them to those who are not of their tribe. A common farmer will make you understand in three words that his knee is out of place, or his collar-bone broken ; while a surgeon, after an hundred terms of art, if you are not a scholar, will leave you to seek it.”

Although we may not choose to consult a servant as to the choice of words for a sermon, one thing we are bound to do—that is, have reference to the most unlearned part of our congregation, and not use words which we have reason to believe they may not understand. There is no discourse recorded of our Lord, says the Bishop of Winchester, in which we are not reminded of the truth of his own saying, “to the poor the gospel is preached.” The difficulty of imitating our Saviour in this respect can only be felt by those who have themselves conversed much with the lower classes. Let the preacher question them, and he will find, that if he would be understood, he must clothe his ideas in the language of real life, and borrow his illustrations from images familiar to his hearers. The Romish Church was well aware of this secret, and practised it with corresponding success. “It is notorious,” says Le Bas, in his recent life of Wickliffe, “that the mendicant orders, at their first institution, were the most popular and effective preachers of their day. The Franciscans, more especially, were to be found in every village, and by the unwearied assiduity of their ministrations, they and the Dominicans at one time nearly monopolized the veneration and obedience of the populace throughout Christendom. One great secret of their power was the practice of addressing the people in a familiar style, and in the language of the country.”

Luther, therefore, well said, "I esteem them to be the best preachers who teach the common people and youth most plainly and simply. Christ taught the people by plain and simple parables. He preached of tilling ground, of mustard seed, etc.—using altogether mean and simple similitudes." Matthew Henry, or his biographer, says, "Let your performances be plain and scriptural. Choose for your pulpit subjects such as are plainest and most scriptural, and endeavor to make them plainer. Be serious in the delivery. Affect not fine words, but words which the Holy Ghost teacheth—that is, sound speech which cannot be condemned. Enticing words of man's wisdom debase your matter. Gold need not to be painted. Scripture expressions are what they are used to, and will be remembered. Consider the lambs of your flock. You must take them along with you. Do not over-drive them by being over-long or over-fine." Legh Richmond once received the following advice. "Don't use terms of science. The people have no abstract ideas; they cannot understand comparisons and allusions remote from their habits. Present the same idea in a varied form, and take care that you understand the subject yourself. If you be intelligent, you will be intelligible." Well did he follow that advice, and truly has it been said of him, "The day is coming when the authorship of the Dairyman's Daughter will confer a reputation of higher value, than that of the most splendid effort of genius—the Iliad and Æneid." Although great plainness of style is perfectly consistent with neatness, and even elegance of composition, yet if these are sometimes wanting, no great evil may follow. Some little roughnesses and abruptness in the sermon is better than too much smoothness. A perfectly smooth road may put the traveller to sleep, give him no exercise, do his health no good. So with sermons. Polished sentences may please the ear, but holy truths only affect the heart. As to many congregations in the land, niceties of style are only lost upon

them. In regard to false ornaments and long words, it would be well to remember what Pope says—

“Such labored nothings in so strange a style,
Amaze the unlearned—make the learned smile.”

To the foregoing remarks and testimonies, let me add the two following, which ought to have great weight. “I love a serious preacher,” says Fenelon, “who speaks for my sake, not his own, who seeks my salvation, not his own glory. He best deserves to be heard who uses speech, only to clothe his own thoughts, and his thoughts only to promote truth and virtue. Nothing is more despicable than a professed declaimer who retails his discourses as a quack does his medicine.” Bishop Burnet says, “That is not the best sermon which makes people go away talking with one another and praising the preacher, but that which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone.”

Experience proves the truth of what I have said and quoted on the subject of great plainness. In England, at a time when sermonizing was perhaps as polished and elegant as well could be, religion was at a low ebb. At that time, Wesley and Whitfield rose up and thundered away at the courteous preachers and the sleepy congregations, and went into the highways and hedges preaching to the poor laborers and colliers in a language that they could understand, and in a manner which showed that they were in earnest. And if numbers of the English clergy had not followed the example of their plain and zealous preaching, without imitating their faults, there would have been scarce a church left to us in that land. Even Dr. Johnson, than whom no man more detested rant and cant, said, “The success of the Methodists is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain familiar manner, which is the way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations ; a practice for

which they will be praised by men of sense." He also added, "When the Scotch clergy give up their homely manner, religion will decay in their country"—a prophecy which was not long after realized.

And now I hope that you will not so misunderstand me as to suppose that I recommend carelessness of style or method: that will soon bring a minister to shame. Any congregation in our Church will soon discover that, and cease to respect the minister. I hope, also, that you will not confound vulgarity, or even familiarity, with plainness and simplicity. Even the more unlearned will eschew the former. As to the latter, simplicity is perfectly consistent with a dignified seriousness. I grant, also, that some allowance must be made for the fact, that unfortunately many of our congregations have scarce any poor belonging to them, and that a more refined taste prevails in them than should be gratified if they were more mixed. Still, as a general rule, the style which is best for the poor, is best also for the rich; and how can we expect to draw the poor into our Church but by plain and zealous preaching? Let us remember that in a southern country the slaves are the poor of Christ's flock, and that it is our duty to try and bring them into the Church, by such preaching. It would be well sometimes to address them, especially in the presence of their owners. Would you know where to find the very best school in which to learn the art of plain, extemporaneous preaching, let me advise you to go to the cabin of the negro, and open God's book, and explain it to him, and exhort him out of it. Surely you cannot use unintelligible words in speaking to such poor, ignorant beings, who look to you for instruction.*

* The following answer to the inquiry, how far Candidates for Orders may go in the use of exhortation, and explanation of Scripture amongst the servants and the poor who are destitute of ministerial services, was written at the request of some of the Students of the Seminary.

ON WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN SERMONS.

On no subject scarcely do men, and even sects, more differ, or are more positive, and sometimes even violent, than this. The truth will turn out to be, that some individuals had better

Candidates for Orders being laymen, it may help to determine the question proposed, to consider what is allowable to all laymen. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, are surely allowed, and bound, to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. In order to this, they must collect them together sometimes in considerable numbers, and not only read, but explain the Scriptures to them, and exhort them to believe and obey the same. Sunday-school teachers, even those who are quite young, instruct their classes, explain the Scriptures, which they themselves have first studied in a Bible class, and exhort the children to keep God's word. Superintendents of Sunday-schools, who are generally laymen, add to this, more lengthy exhortations from some elevated position, and often instruct the teachers themselves. Beside this, in all ages of the Church, there have been catechists, unordained persons, appointed to instruct the young and ignorant in the facts and principles of Christianity, using as a guide and help certain catechisms containing more or less of scripture in them. These, in order to fulfil the object of their appointment, must always deal more or less in explanation and exhortation when their classes are collected, which must sometimes be in considerable numbers.

Candidates for Orders are laymen of a peculiar character, and surely not less to be trusted than those above mentioned. Most of them have previously been engaged as Sunday-school teachers, and still act as such. They have so studied the Scriptures as to hope that they have become wise unto their own salvation, and not only this, but they feel solemnly called by the Holy Spirit to the work of the ministry. Others think the same of them, and, according to the canons, recommend them "as possessing such qualifications as will render them apt and meet to exercise the ministry to the glory of God and the edifying of the Church." In order, however, that they may be "thoroughly furnished to the work," they engage in a course of studies, either at a theological seminary, or under some bishop or other minister. The question is, shall they, thus qualified and continually improving, be placed below ordinary laymen, by being deprived during their candidateship, of the privilege of instructing the poor, the ignorant, and the destitute whom Providence may cast in their way; or may they not profitably to themselves and others, without invading the ministerial office, speak a word of exhortation to servants whose masters will thank them for it, to poor white persons in a region of country destitute of ministerial services, in the suburbs of a city, or in a jail, hospital, or poor house, or any other place unvisited by the ordained preacher, and who, but for such services, would receive no religious instruction or exhortation. Let the appeal be made to Him who has declared "He will have mercy, rather than sacrifice." Such are the services which have ever been held in the neighborhood of the Seminary, with the approbation of the Bishops and Professors. If at any time they exceeded their bounds, disapprobation has been expressed, and the error cor-

adopt one, and some the other, according to their talents, and the character of those to whom they preach. In England, where many of our Episcopal congregations are mostly composed of the poor—the very poor sometimes—extempore

rected. Such exercises as the above are not only consistent with the liberty allowed heads of families, and Sunday-school teachers, but are not forbidden, either by the letter, or the spirit of the canon concerning lay-reading. That canon was designed, and very properly, to preserve a clear distinction between one preparing for Orders, and those in Orders. It allows the candidate to read certain parts of the service, and a homily or sermon in the church, but he must not wear the dress of the minister, or go into the pulpit or deliver his own sermon. It is evident that this is designed for the public church and regular congregation which is without a minister for the time being, and not for any private house, school-room, jail, poor-house, etc.—where some poor neglected souls may be gathered together, and who may sometimes be more profitably addressed in a few plain, affectionate, extempore exhortations, than in a regular sermon, read to them out of a book. We know how difficult it is to get a tolerable Episcopal congregation together to hear a lay-reader, how much more the persons alluded to, whose prejudices in our country are so strongly set against anything which is written and read.

My advice therefore, has always been, that the young men at the Seminary be ready and desirous to form Sunday-schools among the poor and destitute around, to collect the servants together whenever an opportunity offers, to visit the abodes of suffering, the poor-house and the hospital, or any other place where ministerial services are not afforded, and there exercise themselves beforehand, as far as the laws of the Church allow, in those labors of love which it will be their duty to perform more abundantly, when ordaining hands shall have been laid upon them; and if they do not take delight in the same, it should lead to the solemn inquiry, whether they have not mistaken their calling.

In conclusion. If at any time and place, persons should come in such numbers and of such character, as to make the officiating person even seem to wear the ministerial office, he should not only take all pains to remove such impressions, but feel it his duty to invoke the aid of some one commissioned to preach the word with all authority, and administer the Holy Sacraments. By so doing, he will show himself desirous to comply with the evident design of the Church, to establish a marked distinction between the clergy and the laity, without interfering with those rights and privileges of the latter, which are so necessary to their usefulness as members of the Church of God, and by the exercise of which they are such important auxiliaries to the former.

WILLIAM MEADE,
Bishop of the P. E. C. of Virginia.

P. S. I need not add, that in choosing some scriptures from which to exhort, the good sense, as well as piety of the candidate, will select the plainest and most important portions, so that little else but exhortation will be required.

preaching is often used by our most pious ministers, and is felt to be best. In our country, where the congregations are more uniformly of the intelligent order, perhaps written discourses, well read, are best, being most instructive. Where, however, there are talents for extempore delivery, the impression is generally greater. Where persons cannot get over a close, inanimate way of reading, let them by all means try and extemporize; for nothing can be worse than bad reading. Bishop Burnet recommended and practised extempore preaching. Bishop Stillingfleet, on the contrary, complained, "There has got an ill habit of speaking extempore, and a loose and careless way of teaching, in the pulpit, which is easy to the preacher, and plausible to less judicious people." Archbishop Secker discusses the question, and recommends a *via media*, the writing sermons, then delivering them *memoriter*; but says, "After all, every man has his proper gift of God—one after this manner, another after that." Campbell, who wrote so well on rhetoric, practised extempore preaching for many years; then changed, and recommends writing and reading sermons. Baxter says, "I use notes as much as any man when I take pains, and as little as any man when I am lazy or busy, and have not time to prepare." Mr. Cecil's advice was, to preach extempore, and to begin at once: "Take at once the ease and pliancy of youth into the formation of your habit." Mr. Robinson, an eminent minister of the Church, recommended very cautious steps: "Let no man attempt to preach without a book till he has written all and the whole of his sermons for seven years." If the temptation to neglect preparation be great to the extempore speaker, still it must be confessed that the advantage in the delivery is generally very great. At any rate, though the extempore method be not adopted in the pulpit, the ability to lecture and exhort in other places is of great importance, and should be carefully cultivated. A minister will lose many opportunities

for usefulness through the want of it. And even when a discourse is written and read, we should not be confined to it.

“ But never to your words be so enchained,
As to repress some instantaneous thought,
That may, like light'ning, dart upon the soul,
And blaze in strength and majesty divine.”

It is sometimes well to deliver the exordium of the sermon without reference to the manuscript, and thereby secure the attention of the audience. The application, also, (the more animated part,) is often better for being delivered extemporaneously.

ON THE DELIVERY OF A SERMON.

But, at all events, try and learn to read your sermons naturally and feelingly, and be not tied down to the paper. While you are looking at that, the people are looking at each other, or out of the window, or are asleep. In order to easy reading, write in a large and good hand. Dean Swift says, “ Spend half a crown more in the year on paper.” Dr. Mason told his students of divinity to write with the end of a fence rail. Read over your sermons often, until you are master of them; but beware of one thing—when you read over your sermon on Saturday evening, do not say to yourself, “ Here I must hold up my fore-finger with a significant motion, here my right hand with a graceful wave” (Greswell). If you study attitudes in this way, your delivery will be studied and formal, and your own attention, and that of your people, will be drawn off from the sermon to your gestures. Especially are gestures generally out of place, and very unbecoming, when speaking slowly. The right hand should do most of the gesture; the left should seldom or ever be raised, except in union and sympathy with the other. Gestures should be natural, not violent. Jumping backwards and forwards in the pulpit should never be practised. Some one happily remarks, that as the preacher should not be like the trunk of a

tree, immovable, so should he not be like a bough of it, always in motion. The eye, next to the voice, should be the chief instrument of effect, but this cannot be, if it is much required by the manuscript. We should be able to turn easily and naturally to any part of the audience. Then the head also can do its part, which is no small part. As to the voice, let all your art be to imitate nature. The whole art of oratory consists in observing what nature does when unconstrained. You should address yourself to your audience in such a modest, respectful, and engaging manner, that each of them should think you are speaking to him in particular. Every sort of affected tone should be carefully avoided. Beware how you imitate any one, as to voice or manner. "Imitatores, servile pecus!"* Suppose your whole auditory to be but one person, and that you were speaking to him in your parlor. Let the nature of your subject direct the modulation of your voice. Be cool in the rational, easy in the familiar, earnest in the persuasive, warm in the pathetic. Every passion requires a pronunciation proper to itself. Let your voice be distinct and deliberate, and give every word its full sound. Address yourself chiefly to the remotest part of the assembly, then of course all will hear. Sometimes a change from a lower to a higher key of the voice is impressive, provided it be not too great and sudden, so as to appear studied and affected. This is what Quintillian calls, "*ars variandi*," and is not only a

* The propensity to imitation is very strong in man, and ought to be resisted. The Gamaliel under whom young ministers have studied, and whom they admire, is very apt to be imitated, and sometimes perhaps unconsciously. Many years since, I heard three ministers preach, and perceived, in each of them, a singular habit when in the pulpit, of stretching out their arms somewhat after the manner of boxers preparing to strike. On inquiry, I found that they had all of them studied under the same person, and that their master and model was given to this same unbecoming habit. I have at different times met with others, and these not a few, who have most servilely copied after the tones, or emphasis, either in reading the service or preaching, or in private conversation, of some object of their admiration. But this always subjects to ridicule those who practice it.

relief to the preacher, but has a good effect on the hearer. Pauses are sometimes very impressive, give weight to a good thought, awaken attention, and assist both preacher and hearer. As a help to right tones of voice, the advice of Mr. Greswell is good. "Do not think of yourself, neither of your subject chiefly. Thinking of the subject may help to acquire varied tones of voice, but not varied expressions of countenance. Rather think of the persons to whom you are speaking, or of your subject in reference to them."

ON THE LENGTH OF SERMONS.

One word as to the length of sermons. It was a sad time in our Church, of which Cowper wrote, when the preacher

"In just fifteen minutes huddled up the work,
And with a well-bred whisper closed the scene."

It was not so with the Reformers and older divines of the English Church, when the hour-glass was the measure, and sometimes a second glass was run out. But there was good reason for such long sermons in those days. The scriptures were not so abundant. Many could not read, and depended on the pulpit and desk for the word. Controversies were rife. Many things of a political cast were introduced into the pulpit. When Queen Elizabeth had some object to effect, it is said, "she always tuned the pulpits." When such length ceased to be needed, the other extreme was run into. Every thing was generalized and abridged. "*Dum brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*," was the result with thousands of preachers. Moral essays drawn out of religion, instead of religion, became the order of the day; and these you know must not be long, for the people will not bear length in such things as moral essays. It is only a faithful scriptural preacher that can venture on a long sermon, unless in the case of some rare orator, and then only occasionally. The length of a sermon should depend on many circumstances. In a town where they

are frequent, they should be shorter, and may often be divided with advantage. The subject should regulate the length. An argumentative, explanatory, historical, or controversial sermon, may be much longer than a hortatory one. One on the deep experience of the soul should not be drawn out too far. The length of the sermon must also depend upon the voice, style, delivery and talents of the preacher. Some men without wearying can preach much longer than others. If it be asked, however, to specify the bounds, I should say in our Church and country from half an hour to an hour. Never beyond the one, nor short of the other. Generally between thirty and forty minutes, I should think would be the best rule. But how are we to decide for ourselves? If a preacher cannot learn from his own observation upon his people, let him ask some faithful judicious friend to ascertain and tell him the honest truth, for a wearied congregation cannot profit by what they are tired of hearing. And in deciding the point, the lambs of the flock should not be forgotten or disregarded. But as to one thing, make up your mind before you choose your judicious friend and ask his advice, and that is, to take it, and follow it, and not through vanity think that your sermons are too good to be abridged.*

* The speaker is liable to mistake on this subject, from the difference between his state and that of his hearers. He is delivering the result of his labors, and to which he is partial. He is in action, and incited by the delivery, and deeply interested. They are in a passive state, in an easy posture, drowsy perhaps, and finding it hard to continue their attention. Those who are speaking, whether in private or public, are apt to forget the great difference between themselves, and their hearers; they wishing to go on, their hearers wishing them to stop.

LECTURE XIII.

ON THE APPLICATION OF SERMONS.

I PROPOSE in this lecture, to speak of the application of sermons, showing how the different faculties and affections of our nature should be addressed, and to whom the application is to be made. And first, there is a difference of opinion and practice as to the part of the sermon in which the application should come. Some intersperse various short applications throughout the discourse. Others reserve it all for the close, and sometimes make it tedious, as people are then most apt to be weary.

The application of a sermon is two-fold—to the heart, understanding and conscience, and to the life. It seeks to convince, persuade, effect, and also to lead to holy resolutions and actions. It must therefore condemn evil actions, and commend good ones, condemn wrong principles, and recommend right ones. As a general rule we should recommend the application to be made in part, at least, as the sermon progresses, for the sake of variety, and to keep alive the attention, and because the improvements should not be long separated from the lesson. When all these reasonings and statements of the sermon come first and together, and the

feelings and conscience are unemployed, the attention is apt to weary, and if anything be lost in hearing, the subsequent application loses much of its force, whereas short applications of the different parts, sometimes even in a parenthesis, help the hearers to make the improvement. Moreover, to reserve all the proper improvement to the last, is apt, as we have already hinted, to make it tiresome. All high emotions are of short duration. To attempt to keep them long in exercise is worse than useless: Lengthened narrative and reasoning may be borne, but a long continued exhortation and impassioned appeal to the heart and conscience, is most oppressive. It is like too much rich, sweet, and cloying food to the stomach. Some pious ministers err, by making the whole sermon highly impassioned, nothing but warning—entreaty—upbraiding—or experimental effusion. This may do for a very short sermon, now and then; but all the faculties and affections should have their due portion of exercise. As there are some subjects which may admit of the whole application being reserved to the last with advantage, so there are some minds which would prefer this method generally, and there are some preachers who can manage it better in this way than the other. The method of the sacred writers, I think, favors the former plan, being more irregular, yet more practical and devotional.

HUMAN NATURE TO BE STUDIED.

In order to the more effectual application of divine truth, and the more moving appeals to our faculties and affections, human nature should be well studied, and the correspondence between its several parts and the different truths of religion should be correctly understood. He who made us, and knows what is in man, is the author of our blessed religion, and has exactly fitted it to our nature. Now in the human nature, there is reason, conscience, will; there is the love

of happiness ; hatred of misery ; there is hope and fear as to something to come ; there is a capacity of love, and gratitude, and penitence ; there is a sense of sin and shame ; there are also certain social affections capable of being enlisted in the cause of religion. Answering to all these things in man, there are in the gospel great principles addressed to the reason ; solemn appeals to the conscience and will ; there are things to be loved, and things to be hated ; things to be hoped for, and things to be feared ; blessed promises and awful threatenings. The business of the preacher is to apply these things ; rightly to divide the words of truth ; giving to each his portion in due season. In this respect he must be a wise master-builder, thoroughly furnished for his work, so as not to be ashamed of it.

There may be a very faithful declaration of the whole counsel of God, and yet for want of this knowledge of application and appropriation, it may be much less efficacious. In the composition of a sermon therefore, we should always keep, as it were, an anatomy of the inward man before us, and often look at it and remember to do justice to its several parts. The great masters of oratory in this world, know how to address themselves to the different passions and prejudices of men, and make use of all attendant circumstances and passing events so as to gain their point. Some seem to have the hearts, minds, and all that is in their hearers, as if it were in their own hands, to carry them just where they please. Nor must this be neglected in religion. St. Paul did not neglect it. See the effect of it in his speeches before Felix and Agrippa. Especially see how it wrought upon the Corinthians, and roused into action every principle within them. What indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge, his reproof wrought in them ? A minister with half the learning, half the logic, half the imagination, half the use of language, half the power and sweetness of

voice and acceptableness of manner, who nevertheless understands how, and takes due pains to address himself and sermon to human nature aright, will do more good, than another who is ignorant or negligent of this, though abounding with the above mentioned qualities. "The God of Nature," says Dr. Watts, "has furnished mankind with those powers which we call passions or affections of the heart, in order to excite the will with superior vigor and activity to avoid the evil and pursue the good. Upon this account the preacher must learn to address the passions in a proper way, and I cannot but think it a very imperfect character of a Christian preacher, that he reasons well upon every subject, and talks clearly upon his text, if he have nothing of the pathetic in his ministrations, no talent at all to strike the passions of the heart. Awaken your spirit therefore in composition, contrive all lively, forcible and penetrating forms of speech to make your words forcible and impressive on the hearts of your hearers, when light is first let in on the mind. Practise all the awful and solemn ways of addressing the conscience, all the soft and tender influences on the heart. Try all methods to rouse and awaken the cold, the sleepy, the stupid race of sinners. Learn all the language of holy jealousy and terror to affright the presumptuous; all the compassionate and encouraging manners of speaking, to comfort, encourage, and direct the awakened, the penitent, the willing, and the humble; all the winning and engaging modes of discourse, and exhortation, to constrain the hearers of every character to attend. Seek this happy skill of reigning and triumphing over the hearts of an assembly. Persuade them with power to love and practice all the important duties of goodness, in opposition to the flesh, and the world, and the devil. Endeavor to kindle the soul to zeal in the holy warfare, and to make it bravely victorious over all the enemies of its salvation."

SUCH PASSAGES TO BE SOUGHT FOR IN THE SCRIPTURES AND OTHER BOOKS.

In order to success in addressing the heart it would be well in our reading of scripture, sermons, and other books, to mark and copy such passages as are most touching, impressive and convincing, for frequent use. The scriptures, of all books are the most pathetic, most practical; their language being the most apt to enter the heart. What can compare with the history of Joseph and his brethren, the offering of Isaac, the history of Ruth, of David, Saul and Jonathan, of Nathan's parable, of Daniel in the court of Darius and in the lion's den, of Esther and Mordecai, but especially the parables, miracles, and the evangelical narrative of the sufferings and death of our Lord. If anything in the way of narrative can touch and move the heart of man, it must be there. How promptly do they affect the hearts of children. These things were intended as examples to us.

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING FURNISHES PATHETIC APPEALS.

There are also many pathetic and distressing things in this life; many houses of mourning; many sorrows to man; and the minister above all men should know by his own experience, that it is "better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting." He should be ever looking out for the "*mollia tempora fandi*," and use them most diligently and pathetically. More can be done with the human heart in a few moments of deep affliction, than in years of prosperity. Then the heart is soft and receives the seed which soon vegetates and springs up. At other times it is as the way side, or the rock. A proper reference at other times, to the death of friends, children, parents, husbands, wives, to the danger of an eternal separation, to death-bed warnings and entreaties, is very effective. God has implanted these tender affections in our hearts for purposes far more impor-

tant than mere earthly happiness, and they should be used for those higher purposes. But then they should be used with great wisdom, and not too often; lest it become mere professional art in the preacher, and expose him to ridicule, and lose its effect on the hearer; and lest, as is too often the case, mere natural emotions be substituted for religion. On this account, as well as for reasons already stated, funeral sermons should be but seldom delivered, and then with great care and wisdom. "The eye weepeth on every occasion," saith Solomon. There is a fact set forth in these words fraught with much meaning. We must not measure the effect of our sermons by the tears drawn forth at some pathetic appeal, for the same eye was, perhaps, weeping over the unreal scenes of some irreligious novel the over-night, while some object of real distress was permitted to remain unpitied and unassisted in the nearest hovel.

In endeavoring to move the affections we should beware of one great error. We must distinguish between describing right feelings, exhorting to them, upbraiding our hearts for not thus feeling, and the best methods of leading them to feel. The picture and the living original are different things. The one is cold and lifeless, though still, perhaps, beautiful and correct, while the other is warm, animated and animating. We must try as much as possible and bring the reality before the hearts of our hearers, and bring it so near, and in such a form, as to move them. A poor suffering fellow-being, seen and heard by us, will move the heart far more than the most eloquent appeals in behalf of charity. The best appeals are those which describe objects of distress. "Better," says Solomon, "in the day of our calamity is a friend that is near, than a brother afar off." We may write to him that is afar off, and tell him of our wants, but the neighbor sees and knows them. The sight and tears of a client are often of more avail than all the eloquence of the advocate.

Among the means of placing religion before the very heart, so as to take hold of it, you will do well to treasure up for use affecting incidents in the lives of pious persons ; circumstances leading to their conversion ; awful instances of sin ; wretched death-bed scenes, as well as happy ones. Mr. Fletcher, having married a certain person, and being about to make the accustomed entry, said, "Well, William, you have had your name entered into our register once before this." "Yes, sir," he replied ; "at my baptism." "And now your name must be entered a second time. You have, no doubt, thought much about your present step, and made proper preparations for it in many different ways ?" "Yes, sir." "Recollect, William, that a third entry of your name—the register of your burial—will, sooner or later, take place. Think, then, about death, and make preparations for that also, lest it overtake you as a thief in the night." This and other things said produced an effect on his heart and life, of which he ever after spoke with pleasure. Let me add, that well-chosen pieces of sacred poetry from Milton, Young, Cowper, and from the best hymns, not too long nor too often introduced, have a very happy effect in rivetting some truth on the heart, and fixing it on the memory for future use. Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, and such like, may be left to other orators.

There is yet one other remark I would make as to the application of sermons, and that is to recommend the kind which Bishop Taylor adopts in his work on Holy Living, a set of resolutions at the close of the sermon, drawn from it, and to be put in practice. Occasionally, this is the very best of improvements.

APPLICATION OF SERMONS TO THE UNCONVERTED.

I shall devote the remainder of this lecture to the consideration of a question of no slight importance to a minister, and on which it behoves him to come to some positive deci-

sion, and to act with energy. I mean the application of our sermons to the unconverted. Are we, as some think, merely to set forth, in their hearing, the method of salvation by the gospel, and leave it to God to make the application; or are we earnestly and affectionately to press them to accept it? I know not how I can more effectually urge the latter method than by presenting the views of the pious, the evangelical Mr. Newton, whose adoption of the Calvinistic system generally will add force to his opinion. "If," he says, "we were to decide to which of these different methods of preaching the preference is due, by the discernible effects of each, it will perhaps appear in fact, without making any invidious comparisons, that those ministers whom the Lord has honored with the greatest success in awakening and converting souls, have generally been led to adopt the more popular way of exhortation or address; while they who have been careful to avoid any direct application to sinners, as unnecessary and improper, if they have not been altogether without seals to their ministry, yet their labors have been more owned in building up those who have already received the knowledge of the truth, than in adding to their number. Now, as he that winneth souls is wise, and as every faithful laborer has a warm desire of being instrumental in raising the dead in sin to a life of righteousness, this seems a presumptive argument, at least, in favor of those who, besides stating the doctrines of the gospel, endeavor, by earnest persuasions and expostulation, to impress them upon the hearts of their hearers, and entreat and warn them to consider 'how they shall escape, if they neglect so great salvation;' for it is not easy to conceive that the Lord should most signally bear testimony in favor of that mode of teaching which is least consistent with the truth and with itself." Mr. Newton then shows that we have the example of our Lord himself, who often addressed the multitude, and that the apostles copied after His example; St. Peter exhort-

ing even Simon Magus, when in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, to "repent and pray, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him." In answer to the objection, that repentance and faith are spiritual acts, for the performance of which a principle of spiritual life is absolutely necessary, and that, therefore, to exhort an unregenerate sinner to repent or believe must be as vain and fruitless as to call a dead person out of his grave, he well replies, "That we might cheerfully and confidently undertake to call even the dead out of their graves, if we had the command and promise of God for our warrant in the attempt, for then we might expect that His power would accompany our word." The deplorable state of many of our hearers may often remind us of the Lord's question to the prophet, "Can these dry bones live?" Our resource, like that of the prophet, is entirely in the sovereignty, the grace and power of our Lord. "O Lord, thou knowest." Impossible it is to us, but easy to thee, to raise them up to life: therefore, we renounce our own reasonings; and though we see that they are dead, we call upon them at thy bidding, as if they were alive, and say, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." The means is our part; the work is thine: to thee be all the praise. The dry bones could not hear the prophet, but while he spoke the Lord caused breath to enter into them, and they lived; but the word was spoken to them considered as "dry and dead." "Should we," he says, "admit that an unconverted person is not a proper subject for ministerial exhortation, because he has no power of himself to comply, the just consequence of this position would extend too far, even to prove the impropriety of all exhortation; for, when we invite the weary and heavy laden to come to Jesus, that they may find rest; when we call upon backsliders to remember from whence they are fallen, to repent and do their first works; yea, when we exhort believers to walk worthy of God, who has called them into His kingdom and glory; in each

of these cases, we press them to acts for which they have no inherent power of their own ; and unless the Lord, the Spirit, is pleased to apply the word to their hearts, we do but speak unto the air. Our endeavors can have no more effect in these instances than if we were to say to a dead body, ‘ arise and walk.’ An exertion of Divine power is no less necessary to the healing of a wounded, than to the breaking of a hard heart ; and only He who has begun the good work of grace is able either to revive or maintain it. Though sinners are destitute of spiritual life, they are not, therefore, mere machines : they have a power to do many things, which they are called upon to exert ; they are capable of considering their ways ; they know that they are mortal, and the bulk of them are persuaded in their consciences, that, after death, there is an appointed judgment ; they are not under any unavoidable necessity of living in known and gross sins ; and that they do so, is not for want of power, but of will. The most profane swearer can refrain from his oaths, while in the presence of a person whom he fears, and to whom he knows it would be displeasing. Let a drunkard see poison put into his liquor, and it may stand by him untasted from morning till evening. They have a power, likewise, of attending upon the means of grace ; and though the Lord only can give them true faith and evangelical repentance, there seems no impropriety in inviting, upon the ground of the gospel promises, to seek to Him who is exalted to bestow these blessings, and is able to do for them what they cannot do for themselves, and who has said, ‘ Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ We should undoubtedly endeavor to maintain a consistency in our preaching ; but unless we endeavor to keep the plan and manner of the scripture constantly in view, and attend to every part of it, a design of consistency may fetter our sentiments, and greatly preclude our usefulness. We need not wish to be more consistent than the inspired writers, nor be afraid of speaking as

they have spoken before us. We may easily perplex ourselves and our hearers by nice reasonings on the nature of human ability and the Divine agency on the hearts of men, but such disquisitions are better avoided. We shall, perhaps, never have full satisfaction on these subjects till we arrive at the world of light. In the meantime, the path of duty—the good old way—is plain before us. If, when you are in the pulpit, the Lord favors you with a lively sense of the greatness of the trust, and the worth of souls committed to your charge, and fills your heart with His constraining love, many little curious distinctions which amused you at other times will be forgotten; your soul will go forth with your words; and while your bowels yearn over poor sinners, you will not hesitate a moment whether you ought to warn them of their danger or not.” To this valuable testimony of Mr. Newton I shall add, that the great champion of free grace, Dr. Owen, has a very solemn address to sinners, whose running title is, *Exhortations unto Believing*; and that the sentiments of Mr. Scott, the commentator, are the same with those of Mr. Newton.

LECTURE XIV.

ON THE DELIVERY OF A SERMON, AND THE READING
OF THE SERVICE IN A RIGHT SPIRIT, SO AS TO EDI-
FY THE HEARERS AND AID THE WORSHIPPERS.

In the present lecture I shall speak of the delivery of a sermon, and the reading of our excellent service. I do not mean, however, to say, as it is reported the great Athenian orator did, that delivery is the first, second, and third requisite for oratory, for I do not believe it, and perhaps he never said it. I am about to treat the subject very differently from what a mere rhetorician would do. I have already, in the close of a previous lecture, said nearly all I have to say as to the use of the voice and limbs in preaching. What I am now about to say, has reference chiefly to the right preparation of the heart and mind. I speak of the body only as far as that is necessary to the performance of pulpit duties.

It is said of Pericles, the celebrated Athenian orator, statesman, and general, that he never mounted the rostrum to address his fellow-citizens, without first imploring the assistance of the gods. Can that be said of every Christian before ascending the pulpit to speak on subjects of infinitely greater importance? It is said of the great, the intrepid Lu-

ther, that he often declared he never could rise in the pulpit without great fear, and that to the latest period of his life. How many unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoe, enter it with carelessness! St. Paul begged all the saints to pray for him, that he might open his mouth boldly, to speak as he ought to speak. Our Lord himself entered on his works with prayer—spending a whole night in prayer before sending forth His apostles. How necessary that we should pray for ourselves most mightily, when about to engage in this great work. Perhaps you may say, if all due use of prayer has been made in the preparation of the sermon, little else can be needful. Very far from it. Some of you probably will adopt the method of extemporaneous preaching, and you will then have great need of every help which can be obtained of heaven, in order to a ready utterance and impressive delivery. Then will you understand and feel the meaning of the prayer put into our mouth by the Office of Institution: “Fill my memory, oh God, with the words of Thy law; enlighten my understanding with the illumination of the Holy Ghost, in preaching give me a readiness of thought and expression suitable to the clearness and excellency of Thy holy word.” Without expecting that miraculous inspiration promised and given to His disciples on certain occasions, we may, after diligent preparation on our part, and in answer to humble prayer, look for divine assistance when standing between heaven and earth, as a messenger of God to man.

“When the time for the delivery of his discourse draws near,” says Erasmus, “let the preacher profoundly and earnestly devote himself to importunate entreaty and supplication, and let him ask wisdom, utterance, and success, from Him who makes even the tongues of infants eloquent. It would seem almost incredible how great is the light—the vigor—the strength—and the cheerfulness which from this pious exercise accrue not only to the preacher, but also to every

man, when he is about at any time to engage in the performance of difficult and important duties." In another place, he says, "When a man speaks as in the sight of God, with an open heaven, with Christ and His angels before him, he catches the true prophetic fire; he preaches a present salvation from a present Saviour; the Spirit of glory and grace descends, and the flame communicates to his auditory and accompanies them to their houses. This is the celestial science of the sanctuary, not to be taught in schools, nor learned in books."

But let it not be supposed that if we only read our sermons there cannot be so much need of prayer for divine assistance. I hope that none of you will ever be so tied down to your sermons as not to vary from your manuscript occasionally, and introduce some thought, or illustration, or appeal, which may be suggested to the mind by the good Spirit of God. But even should you fear to trust yourselves to an extra thought or an earnest unwritten application of the sermon, or to more private exhortations and lectures; should you confine yourselves entirely to what is precomposed, do not for a moment suppose, that the effect of its delivery may not be very much increased by the state of your heart under the animation of God's Spirit. There is a most wonderful difference between the same discourse delivered in a spirit of love and holy zeal, the result of prayer, and in a cold and prayerless spirit. The countenance, the voice, the manner, all will differ, and the people will melt under the one, and freeze under the other—be wide awake under the one, and fast asleep under the other. One of the most pathetic preachers I ever heard, read very closely, never varied from his sermon; but then, his sermon was written from his heart, which was a very tender one, and was delivered from his heart, through a voice of sympathetic tenderness, speaking in words of love.

Dr. Miller, who I believe always writes and reads his sermons, in his advice to a young man says, "Be assured that

after all the rules and instructions which have been given on pulpit eloquence, and which in their place, have great value—that which outweighs them all, is that you go to the sanctuary with your heart full of your subject—warmed with a love to your Master, and to immortal souls—remembering too, that the eye of that Master is upon you, and that for the sermon you are about to deliver, you must soon give an account before the judgment seat.” “Preaching,” says Mr. Baxter, “is a work which requires greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than most of us commonly bring to it. It is no trifling matter to stand up in the face of a congregation and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy thing to speak so plainly that the most ignorant may understand us—so seriously that the deadest heart may feel—so convincingly that contradicting cavillers may be silenced. Certainly if our hearts were set upon the work of the Lord as they ought to be, it would be done more vigorously than by most of us it is. Alas, how few ministers preach with all their might, and speak about everlasting joys and torments in such a manner as to make men believe that they are in good earnest. It would make a man’s heart ache to see a number of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a minister without hearing a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. The blow often falls so light, that hard-hearted persons cannot feel it. Few ministers will so much as exert their voice, and stir themselves up to an earnest delivery. Or, if they speak loudly and earnestly, oftentimes they do not answer it with earnestness of matter, and then their voice will do but little good. The people will consider it as mere bawling, if the matter do not correspond. On the other hand, to hear what excellent subjects some ministers treat of, who yet let them die in their hands for want of a close and lively application—what fit matter have they for convincing sinners and what little use do they make of it.”

LORD CHATHAM'S METHOD OF STIRRING HIMSELF UP.

With a view to stimulate yourselves to becoming zeal and fire in the pulpit, let me mention a method, which constituted as human nature is, susceptible of lively impressions from well chosen words and thoughts, has been used with advantage by the orator of this world, as well as the preacher.

It is told of Lord Chatham, one of the boldest and most impressive of English orators, that when he had some important subject on hand, and wished to make a mighty effort of mind, he would read some of the boldest flights of Isaiah, thinking them well calculated to elevate his mind, and raise noble thoughts within him. And where shall the Christian orator find such models of eloquence and such powerful motives to eloquence, as in the sacred writings. Let the Christian minister have at hand, a selection of some of those many passages which are big with hope and fear, promise and threat to himself—of tenderness and compassion, yet still of holy terror to the sinner; let him often read them of a Sabbath morning as a stimulant to his languid zeal, and try and stir himself to something of the Saviour's anxiety for lost sinners.

Nor need we despise even some awakening and eloquent appeals from our fellow-beings, to whom God has given more of the spirit of holy zeal than to others. The best passage I know of for this purpose is from a work already commended to your notice, (Baxter's Reformed Pastor.) I cannot do better than to transcribe and read it to you, advising that you often read it on a Sabbath morning.

"O brethren, if we did but know what it is for a soul to pass out of the flesh, to go before a righteous God, and enter on a state of unchangeable joy or torment, and with what amazing thoughts dying men apprehend these things, how differently would such things be discoursed of. I know not what others may think of them, but for my own part I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself that I deal

no more with my own and other men's souls, as becomes one that looks for the great day of the Lord; that I can leave room for almost any other thoughts and words; that such astonishing matters do not wholly take me up. I seldom come out of the pulpit, but my conscience smites me that I have been no more serious and fervent. It accuses me not so much for want of eloquence and human ornaments, nor for letting fall an unhandsome word, but it asks me how couldst thou speak of Heaven and Hell in so careless and sleepy a manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest or in jest? Shouldst thou not weep over sinners even until tears interrupt thy words? Such is the peal which conscience rings in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul will not be awakened. I am confounded to think what a difference there is between my apprehensions of the life to come, in a time of sickness and at other times. O, my brethren, if you had conversed with death as often as I have done, and as often received the sentence in yourselves, you would have an unquiet conscience, if not a reformed life. I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asks me, what hast thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone into eternity, what didst thou to prepare him for it? When you are laying a corpse in the grave, how can you help reflecting, here lies the body, but where is the soul? What did I do for it before it departed? It was part of my charge, what account can I give of it? Oh, sirs, is it a small matter to answer such questions as these? It may seem so now, but the hour is coming when it will appear otherwise."

OTHER PREPARATIVES.

There are other things of an inferior character in the way of preparation for the successful discharge of pulpit duties, which ought not to be despised. Not merely our hearts and

minds are to be exercised, but our voices and bodies also, and these very much depend upon our conduct. If the previous night, or a large part of it, is spent in study, to make up for the neglect of the week, especially if a portion of the Sabbath morning is also demanded for this purpose, we must feel and exhibit the effects thereof in the pulpit, by the languor of our delivery, or the want of familiarity with the sermon. Every thing in mind and body should be in the best possible condition for so high a duty. We should rise at an early hour, and have as much time as possible for prayer and reflection. We should be particular both as to the quantity and quality of our food, seeing that in both respects, it be such as will affect both mind and body most favorably. He that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. I do not mean that we are to be troublesome, as some are, in requiring various tonics or helps for the voice just before entering the pulpit. I rather give as my own, the advice of an old preacher, who said, that the very best thing he had ever tried for the voice was, "just nothing at all." And in relation to restoratives and stimulants afterwards, in which there is anything intoxicating, let me warn you against them. I think that I have the word of God also, for this, which positively forbid the priests of the temple when engaged in sacred duties, to taste either wine or strong drink. Some have fallen victims to the experiment. I remember a melancholy instance of it. A minister of superior talents, most prepossessing manners, standing high for piety, found that his afternoon sermons were more animated and more popular than his morning ones, and ascribing this in some measure to the wine taken at dinner to recruit his energies after the exhaustion of the duties of the morning, resorted to stimulants in the hope of making the morning efforts more powerful and effective, and thus fell.

Let me recommend also as a means of securing presence of mind, conscientious punctuality in your attendance. Always be at church beforehand, and have time to compose your

mind. Never keep the congregation waiting. A waiting congregation is an impatient, complaining one, and not in a good state for hearing profitably.

ON READING THE SERVICE.

Let me not neglect to remind you, that preparation of mind, heart, voice, and the whole man, is needful for the desk and chancel, as well as for the pulpit. To perform the service as a mere exercise, as a sort of prelude to the sermon, as something to be going on while the congregation is collecting, as if to pass off the time until the great business of the day comes on, until the sermon commences ; to read it hastily, as something which it is desirable to be gotten over as easily and expeditiously as possible ; to pronounce it in as low, subdued, inanimate a voice as can possibly be heard, or rather tolerated, as if to see how well the minister might save himself for the sermon, this is surely a most shameful profanation of this part of divine service. We ought beforehand to resolve and prepare against it by private use and study of the prayers and lessons, by searching into their true meaning, so as to give them the proper emphasis. There is one rule for reading the service worth all the volumes which have been written, as to the proper pronunciation of the different words and sentences, and that is, to have the heart in a right state to understand and feel the prayers, hymns, and lessons. This will not only carry our prayers to the throne of heaven, but help to carry others along with us. Dr. Keith, was one of the most impressive readers of the service I ever heard, and yet one of the most defective as to the rules of art laid down on that subject ; but then he put his whole soul and voice into what he read in the desk, as well as what preached in the pulpit. Bishop Ravenscroft was more correct, and not less animated and impressive. It used to be said of him, that he preached the service. Every part but the prayers, which

were addressed to heaven, he delivered as from the pulpit. He literally preached the word in reading the lessons from the desk. The more fervent our piety then, the more apt we shall be to read the service to the edification of the people. It is one of the most provoking things in the world, to hear the service read in a hurried, irreverent manner, and is above all things calculated to bring a Liturgy into disrepute. I doubt not that thousands and hundreds of thousands, have become honestly convinced of the formality and deadness of a Liturgy from hearing it badly read. It was once in derision called the "*Lethargy of the Church*," in allusion to the dull and sleepy manner in which it was read. I hope none of you will ever subject the service to such reproach. The mere reading of the prayers will have little effect in exciting a spirit of prayer throughout the congregation. It is when they are felt and prayed, that the cord of sympathy vibrates from the heart of the minister to the heart of the congregation. Old Dr. Pilmore, of Philadelphia, used always, in asking one to perform the service for him, to say, "will you pray the service," emphasising the word *pray*, and sometimes repeating and explaining it. On the other hand, I remember to have heard a minister of the Church boast that he never yet had met with any one who could go through the Ante-Communion service in so short a time as himself.

What I am saying as to the regular service of the Church, I would say yet more emphatically as to those offices which are only occasionally used ; the Baptismal and Communion services. To go through them in a formal, monotonous, inanimate manner, is inexcusable, and must serve to sink them in the esteem of others, as well as render them less edifying to ourselves.

LECTURE XV.

ON THE PREPARATION FOR, AND ADMINISTRATION OF
THE SACRAMENTS AND RITE OF CONFIRMATION,
THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG, AND
EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE.

HAVING concluded my suggestions as to the best modes of making full trial of preaching for the purpose of accomplishing the objects for which the ministry was appointed, I now proceed to speak of the sacraments which were ordained for carrying on the same work in the hearts of God's people by the help of certain outward signs and observances to which the word is added, or which are different modes of exhibiting and sealing the promises of that word to our eyes and our hearts. I do not design to discuss the theological question, as to the positive or comparative virtue and operation of the sacraments. My object is only to state to you what is the proper course for you to pursue in order to make them most effective instruments for the conveyance of grace to those who use them. If there be anything undeniable in the whole history of the Reformation, and written as with a sunbeam in all parts of our Prayer book, and Homilies, it is this, that the sacraments are not only ineffectual for good, but produc-

tive of evil, unless rightly administered and received. The Offices for their administration, as well as the Articles, are full of exhortation to the worthy receiving of them, and warnings against the contrary. That minister, therefore, who takes most pains to bring his people with proper feelings and habits to them, honors them most. He who is most successful in bringing them rightly and worthily to the sacraments, is the one who most ministers to their efficacy. The most extravagant views of them, as awful mysteries, or as having a magical charm in themselves, will be of no avail without this.

BAPTISM.

I begin with the best mode of making baptism effect the object for which it was appointed. If the candidate be an adult, I need only say that he must come, believing with all his heart, having the answer of a good conscience, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, and thus prepared to make a good confession, having previously become a child of God by faith in Christ, and now being desirous to put on Christ before men as a garment, as well as to be clothed with his righteousness before God. To the adult, baptism is no half-way house between the world and the Church. The font of baptism never stood outside of the door, or in the door of the Church, but altogether within it, and surrounded by the people of God. There stands the minister, and all around are God's people, and the baptized are grafted into the Church of God, admitted into the very bosom of God's family. Do not for a moment hold parley with the doctrine that some historical or negative kind of faith avails for baptism, which is to be changed in the waters thereof into a living, saving faith. It must be a living, saving faith beforehand, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, in order to its being confirmed and strengthened by virtue of prayer offered up in the

use of that sacrament. In order to receive this confirming and strengthening grace, and a comfortable reassurance of God's forgiveness through Christ, the candidate is directed to prepare himself beforehand by fasting and prayers. Thus coming, it will not be an ineffectual sign or vain ceremony to us, a mere mark of difference between the baptized and unbaptized, but an ordinance by which God's Spirit doth work invisibly in our souls, as it does by the word when read or heard with faith. The sacraments have always since the days of the fathers been called *visible words*, which enter the hearts of the faithful through other senses besides those which read and hear the same written and preached truth of God.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

It is equally clear that the full efficacy of the baptism of infants must depend much on its right use and observance. If true faith and heartfelt penitence are required, in order to its worthy reception by the adult, so are these required not only to be promised for the infant, but to be in exercise by those taking part in the dedication. The promise is to believers and their children. The children are in one sense holy. They are the children of the promise, belong to the kingdom, and have a right to be entered into the covenant, and be sealed with the seal thereof. This under each dispensation has been done in a solemn manner, and with holy promises by suitable persons. If the mere baptism with water in the name of the Trinity, were all that is necessary to comply with God's will and to give full efficacy to the ordinance, then it would suffice to appoint unlettered and even ungodly deacons, who might travel throughout the length and breadth not of Christendom only, but of the whole earth, and seizing for a moment every little child who could be caught up in their arms, make Christians of the same. Something of this kind has been done by Romish missionaries, to the great scandal of our religion.

The Holy Catholic Church of God has been guilty of no such profanation of this interesting ordinance of heaven, but has endeavored to receive the children of promise into her bosom in a manner becoming the gracious privilege which is granted to them. The persons appointed to present them, whether parents or others, whether in the Jewish or Christian Church, have been called "God-Fathers," and "God-Mothers," because expected and required to have an holy affection for the children, and to bring them up for God. In the choice of persons to be God-Fathers and God-Mothers, ministers may, and should have much to do. If they are bound to admit no adults to baptism, without the declaration of a living faith, and a life conformable to the same ; if they have a right to refuse baptism to unbelievers, heretics, and evil livers, they surely have right to refuse unbelieving and ungodly sponsors, and should prevent them from publicly dishonoring the holy ordinance, by the utterance of falsehood in the unfelt vows which they would make. In our mother Church, only communicants, according to the rubric, are allowed to be sponsors, and even parents, if ~~not~~ communicants, are not admitted. The reason sometimes assigned for the exclusion of parents, is, that as they have already such strong natural affection for their children, it is not so needful to bind them by vows, but in order to insure more holy nurture for the children, others of pious character are added to them. Perhaps there may have been another, though unassigned, reason for their exclusion, viz., the greater difficulty to the minister in refusing to admit unworthy parents to be the guardians and teachers of her adopted children. Well persuaded that it was the right and duty of the ministers, to use their influence in seeing that this part of the Church's discipline was properly attended to, I have almost from the commencement of my ministry, effectually prevented any but communicants from being sponsors. When it has been proposed that any others, even the parents,

should be sponsors, I have generally requested an interview with such, and have gone over with them the whole baptismal service, and have asked them to say whether they could consistently and conscientiously join in it, and whether the Church ever designed it for other than those who felt all contained therein in their very hearts. I can truly say that in no single instance do I ever remember to have failed in producing an acknowledgment that I was right. In the American Prayer Book, the rubric forbidding parents to be sponsors, and requiring them to be communicants was left out. The reason which has been assigned for this is, that parents, though attached to their children by natural affection, yet require to be bound by solemn vows, and that Episcopalians at the time our Church was organised in this country were so few and so scattered abroad, that there was often great difficulty in obtaining others than parents, or a sufficient number without them. In proportion as our communicants have multiplied, the facility of complying with the evident design of the Church has increased. In only one or two cases have I ever failed by a little trouble, and a little delay, to secure at least one communicant to act as sponsor, and in those few cases, as the parents were anxious to have their children baptized, but said that they could not be sponsors, I have so far abridged and accommodated the service, as to be myself both the minister and sponsor.

In order to render the baptism of infants the more interesting, let me advise you to urge its performance at an early period, for various reasons which I need not mention. See also that without very sufficient reasons to the contrary, it be done always in public. Do not let parents and others overrule the Church in this matter. Be firm, and wait awhile, and they will be brought forward as the rubric directs. At three different times, in three different congregations, where a contrary practice had long prevailed, and where I was entreated

not to insist upon it, the most entire success attended my efforts, and those opposed to the measure became satisfied of the propriety of its public performance. I well remember a conversation with Bishop White on this subject, soon after he had stated from the pulpits of the three churches in Philadelphia under his care, that there would be no more private baptisms in the congregations without good cause. Speaking of the opposition of some who threatened not to have their children baptized at all, he said, it only proved that the baptism of the children of such persons was not likely to be of much service to them, thereby showing that highly as he esteemed the ordinance, yet the mere outward performance was of little avail without other things on the part of man as well as God. But do not suppose that the mere publicity of its performance will suffice. It may be performed with a formality and indifference which will only disgust the congregation, and not excite to fervent prayer. Have certain seasons for it, as of old, only oftener. Let the sweet hymns for the occasion be sung. Speak to the parents and the children present on the subject, in the sermons or exhortations, and seek to make it as interesting an occasion as possible. And then consider that you have but just begun the improvement of baptism. Follow it up from that time forward with exhortations, private and public, to sponsors and children. Catechise the children as the canons direct, in the presence of their parents and sponsors, before the whole congregation, as well as in the Sunday-school. Keep them and their teachers well supplied with suitable books. In visiting from house to house, remember the children in the scriptures you select, the remarks you make, and the prayers you offer up. Consider them as the lambs of your own flock, the children of your own family. Let this be one among many other reasons for feeling yourself to be their minister for life, instead of roving from place to place. Feel that you are the owner of the farm, not the renter of it, who may remove or

be removed at the end of each year, and of course will not be careful to improve it. When you baptize a child, think of it as one whom you will present to the bishop for confirmation, whom you may admit to the Lord's Supper, whom you may marry, whom you may bury in that same parish.

CONFIRMATION.

In catechising, and using all other means for the instruction of the baptised children of the Church, according to the baptismal service, you are preparing them for confirmation. But as the time approaches for presenting such as are desirous, with their own mouth and consent, to renew their baptismal vows, you have need of increased diligence, fidelity, and wisdom. Confirmation, rightly viewed, prepared for, and received, is one of the main safeguards of the Church's purity. If you encourage or consent to it when imperfect views of religion exist in the mind, and when the heart is unchanged, you may expect nothing but trouble and mortification afterwards. When confirmed, they have a right to the Lord's Supper, and are bound, in consistency, to partake of it at once. They have made, in confirmation, the fullest profession of Christianity which can be expressed by words; they have solemnly promised to partake of the Lord's Supper, if it be administered the next moment, because they promised to keep God's holy will and commandments; one of which commandments is, "Do this in remembrance of me." To turn their backs on the Lord's table, immediately after, is deliberately to violate a vow just made. The minister who consents to this encourages the sin. Instruct them, therefore, thoroughly in the baptismal vows. Teach them that this is not to be done to please parents and minister, so that it may appear as if they had done their duty, but that it is to be their own conscientious act; that they are to speak from the deep experience of their own hearts. Beware of the fear of offend-

ing parents by declining to present their unprepared children. Admit no light, ignorant, pleasure-loving ones to the rite, lest it be iniquity, however solemn the ceremony: do not hurry them to this profession. Better let anxious inquirers continue weeks and months in some mental solicitude, than speak peace to them too soon. Many of God's most faithful and successful ministers testify, from experience, that they have often regretted the premature admission of persons to full communion with the Church, but never the advice to delay it a little. The eager desire of contending sects to add to their numbers, and the fear lest their opponents should seize upon the candidate for Church membership before them, has of late years led many ministers to violate the dictates of their own judgment, and to encourage a too hasty profession of religion. The anxiety of our ministers to have as many as possible to present to the Bishop at his visitation, and to report to the Convention at the annual meeting, tempts to the same error; but each of these should be resisted: nothing but evil comes of it. Not only do such persons bring reproach upon the Church by their irreligious lives, but they themselves, when coming to more serious thought, esteem both Church and the minister who presented them the less for this abuse of a solemn rite. I have even known some reflect with severity on the printed certificates, which some bishops give to each one who is confirmed, assuring them that they are God's children, they well knowing that there was no such spirit in them at the time. If, therefore, my young friends, you would have persons regard confirmation as an apostolic rite, on which God's blessing may be expected, you must see when you enter the ministry that it is used as the apostles used it, and designed that we should also.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As confirmation is designed to be an immediate introduc-

tion to the Lord's Supper, of course the preparation for the one is a preparation for the other, only that, as the former is but once administered, and the latter often, the preparation for the latter is to be continually going on, that we may always worthily and beneficially partake of it. As none can be admitted to the Lord's Supper, but those who are confirmed, or are ready and desirous so to be, and since none can be confirmed but such as are presented to the bishop by the minister as worthy to receive that rite, it follows of course and of necessity, that none can come to the Lord's Supper, without the consent of the minister. None should come there, for the first time, without previous conversation with the minister. In our Mother Church, this was carried so far, that a canon, which still remains unrepealed, was passed, requiring each communicant on every occasion of the Lord's Supper, to notify the minister of his design and wish to partake, on the evening before, or on the morning of the day. In some of our dioceses in this country, the duty of conversing with the minister previous to the first participation of the Supper is enjoined by canon, and the principle is plainly involved in what is required for Confirmation. It is to be feared that there are still some instances where ministers permit the contrary practice, not only as to the Lord's Supper, but as to Confirmation. It may not be out of place here to consider a question sometimes agitated, as to the admission of the members of other denominations to our communion. Some ministers especially invite those of good standing in orthodox societies to partake at the table of our common Lord. Others decline doing this, saying that the general invitation to all who truly repent, believe and love is sufficient, and that they mean by that, to bid such an hearty welcome. To me it appears that the former is the safer plan, and more in accordance with the wholesome regulation of our Church. When we invite our own members, we invite such as have been

confirmed, or are desirous so to be, and who are in good standing, but if when we mean to be courteous and brotherly to others, we leave it to all to decide for themselves who shall come, we open a wide door through which heretics and excommunicated persons and evil livers may enter. I do not say that it is necessary in all, or most of our congregations, to give such notice always, but only that when and where it is expedient, the special invitation seems safest and best.

DISCIPLINE.

The admission to, and rejection from the Lord's Supper, is one of the modes of exercising discipline in the Church of God. This is one of the keys by which ministers open or shut the kingdom, one of the instruments by which they bind or loose, punish or forgive sins, in the way that Protestants understand those terms. In this, as in most things, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Our Church has set us the proper example as to the best method of doing this. In the articles, and in all the services, she solemnly declares that the unworthy receiving the supper, so far from benefitting, is unto condemnation; thereby deterring from the improper participation. In connexion with the communion service, she has several addresses, wherein she goes somewhat further and directs the minister to warn all evil livers, all hinderers of God's word, not to come to that holy table. And then in the rubric she enjoins it upon the minister not to suffer certain offenders to come. In all that is said on this subject in our Articles, Offices, Rubrics, and Canons, it has ever appeared to me that the minister has a model, after which he should regulate and proportion his own conduct. Let him publicly and privately declare to all men the danger of the unworthy partaking the Lord's Supper. Let him also, in relation to such as will commune, though in his opinion unworthy, but who yet are not guilty of outward acts certainly justifying

a positive exclusion, advise them not to come, lest it be to their injury, and the injury of others; and then as to those guilty of certain transgression, or of holding heretical principles, let him say to them, according to the rubric, I cannot suffer you to come. It will seldom, however, happen, that a faithful exhibition from the pulpit, and in private, of the word of God, and the doctrine of the Church on this subject, and an honest but affectionate expression of the minister's opinion and wish, will fail to supersede the necessity of this regular excommunication. I shall only add that occasional meetings with the communicants alone, in which all the privileges and duties of God's peculiar people are set forth, will very much conduce to that state of things in which discipline will be but little required; I say but little required; for it must be exercised while the Church is on earth, and the evil mingled with the good. A Church without discipline is not the true Church of God. We have no more right to dispense with it, and expect to make full trial of our ministry, than we have to dispense with the word, and worship, and sacraments of God's appointment. But still, it is that strange work in which, as God does not, so his ministers should not delight, but ever perform with the pain which a father feels when he corrects the erring child whom he tenderly loves, or casts off the profligate one, whose continuance in his house would corrupt the household.

LECTURE XVI.

ON PASTORAL DUTIES.

THE minister's office is emphatically the pastoral office. He is a shepherd of souls. God himself disdains not to be called the "Shepherd of Israel." Christ is called the "great Shepherd," and also "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." He was first revealed unto shepherds. They have to give an account to the owners of the flocks of every one that is lost; and, therefore, if only one of the hundred committed to a shepherd's care goes astray on the mountains, he leaves the ninety and nine on the plain, and goes in search of the lost one. Ministers also watch as those who must give account. In our solemn ordination service, souls are regarded as Christ's sheep, dispersed abroad through a naughty world, after whom we must look, and let none be lost. Shepherds, we know, follow and look after their sheep by day, and keep near to their folds by night, lest wild beasts should devour them, or thieves should steal them. They lead them also into good pastures and to pure waters. The spiritual shepherd must do likewise—must watch over the people of his charge by day and by night; follow them from house to house; feed them with knowledge and understanding; carry the little ones like lambs in his

arms, and gently lead the elder ones. The minister must be acquainted with his flock, and his flock must know him. Each one must know his voice, and be ready to come when he calls, and he must know each one by name. So it is with earthly shepherds, in some countries where the flocks are not too large; they have names for each one of the flock. It is wonderful how soon a faithful shepherd will discover whenever one of his hundred is missing, and how even his faithful dog will traverse the mountain, until it is found.* The life of a shepherd is the most interesting of all servile occupations; and the life of a faithful and affectionate minister is the happiest and most useful of all the professional offices of men. But then he must be that "good man of religion" whom Chaucer describes as going about like his Master, doing good.

"Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder;
But he ne left nought, for ne rain, ne thunder,
In sickness and in mischief to visitte
The ferrest in his parish, mocke and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff."

The preparation for this must begin in his own heart. The heart must be deeply engaged in it, or else the private part of the pastoral office will not only be a most irksome thing, but, as a necessary consequence, be in a great measure neglected. Other things, (such as vanity, ambition, pride,) being gratified by the acceptable discharge of pulpit duties, may stimulate to

* There is probably more designed in this parable of an hundred sheep than some may suppose. In those mountainous countries—such as Scotland, Switzerland, &c., where the pastures are too barren to sustain large flocks, the sheep, when turned out each morning from their fold, (which is usually on the plain, or hollow of the mountain,) immediately disperse themselves abroad over the mountain, in quest of food, and are never seen during the day in compact bodies, as in our fields. In the evening, the shepherd and his faithful dog gather them together and fold them on the plain. Should one be missing, they leave those on the plain, and go in search of the lost one. It is said that in most places an hundred sheep are as many as one shepherd can attend to. May not this parable have been designed to condemn those ministers who despise small congregations, and court larger ones than they can properly serve? It is not well to undertake to manage too many of Christ's people, who "are dispersed abroad in this naughty world."

the diligent preparation for them. It is not so as to the more private intercourses with the people, in sickness, distress, poverty, ignorance, and vice. The Spirit of Christ must be in us, and the love of Christ constrain us, or we shall not delight in the performance of these private offices. In order to feel and speak as we ought to do, when we visit our people, we must exercise ourselves in a right way at home. Cotton Mather kept a list of all the members of his church, and used to go over it, by parcels at a time, in his secret prayers, supplicating the most suitable blessings he could think of for each person in particular. Not only did he observe this rule in his daily prayers, but he, every now and then, set apart a whole day for fasting and prayer, on his church's account, when he would pray for every member of his church by name. Let me counsel you to follow this example. Often ask yourselves as to this or that individual, What good can I do to him or her?—what good book or tract can I put into the hand of such an one in my flock? This, as one says, “would be a kind of visiting every member of the congregation, and trying to do them some good, while staying at home.” Thus feeling towards them at home, we should be the better prepared to address them when meeting any of them abroad. But, besides this general preparation of the heart, we must see and go forth furnished with the best materials for religious conversation. Religious conversation is a talent susceptible of great improvement. The reason why some excel in it so much beyond others of superior talents is, that they cultivate it more diligently. In all our reading, whether of the sacred scriptures, other good books, religious papers, or in our intercourse with men, we should bear this in mind, and have a little *vade mecum*, in which we set down facts and topics for conversation, so that we need never be at a loss.

The duty and advantages of being visiting as well as preaching pastors has been felt and acknowledged in every

age. Old Ignatius used to say, "Let assemblies be often gathered. Seek after all by name. Despise not men-servants nor maid-servants." When we spend a night at a private house, we should always try and get the attendance of servants as well as children, and be prepared to say something in connection with a well-chosen portion of God's word, which is specially applicable to them, and by which you may be remembered, and a repetition of your visit desired. In private, you can speak in a much plainer and more effective way, in some respects, than you can in public. The plainest preacher can hardly speak plain enough in the pulpit to be understood, not merely by children, but even by some grown persons. "I have often been surprised," said Mr. Baxter, "how grossly ignorant many persons are, who have been my hearers several years, but who are as unable to answer some of the plainest questions as if they had never heard the gospel in their lives." In another place he says, "In overthrowing the errors of Popery, many have run into the opposite error, and, lest they should seem to favour the doctrine of auricular confession, have neglected all private instruction." Dr. Doddridge says, "My heart does not upbraid me with having kept back any thing that was profitable to my people from the pulpit; but I fear that I have not followed them sufficiently with personal and domestic exhortations." Dr. Watts says, "He that has the happy talent for parlor preaching, has sometimes done more for Christ and souls, in the space of a few moments, than by the labors of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching from the pulpit." Bishop Horne says, "A seasonable word, spoken in common conversation, is often more regarded than a formal discourse from the pulpit." It is stated of Archbishop Usher, that he was eminently useful in that way. "If at his table, there you might find him clearing difficulties of scriptures, especially when learned men did visit him, exceedingly improving every subject, to the edification

of his hearers. The most learned or the meanest capacities might very much improve by his table talk." He was so excellent in this way, that Bishop Burnet says, it often put him in mind of the Queen of Sheba's speech to Solomon: "Happy are these thy servants that stand about thee, and continually hear thy wisdom." Very truly does the Bishop of Winchester say, "Our conversation is, in a general way, a very faithful symptom of the state of the heart. A man will naturally be telling of the things which interest him most. In proportion as he feels the comfort of religious truths in himself, he will be anxious to have others participate in the same saving knowledge, and extend the kingdom of Christ through all his connections." I will only add one more remark in favor of this kind of preaching, which is, that you may not only say things in a plainer and more impressive manner, but that you may say many things in private conversation which you cannot from the pulpit; you may ask and answer questions, solve scruples, remove objections, reprove faults, and communicate knowledge in the parlor, which cannot be done in the pulpit. A portion of the time which is spent in polishing and perfecting sermons would often be better spent in laying up materials for private discourse, and in using the same in pastoral visits.

It is important to remark that this is especially one of those things which must be well done in order to be effectual. Some ministers had better visit less, except they can manage conversation better. Of some it has been too truly said, that they ought to be never anywhere else but in the study or the pulpit, on account either of the lightness, or imprudence, or uncharitableness of their conversation. We would, therefore, suggest some rules for the right conduct of religious conversation.

1st. We must exercise a sound judgment in determining when it is proper to introduce it. To drag it in on occasions when no suitable opening is presented, in some formal way,

and as it were by force, is often very revolting. But since more ministers are apt to err on the other side, through over much caution, let me quote the words of Dr. Watts, who fears "that our caution has been carried much further through our own cowardice or carnality of spirit, than David ever practised it in the 39th Psalm, or our Lord meant it in the 7th of St. Matthew. Let us take heed that we abuse not this prudent caution to a manifest neglect of our duty, and to withholding our lips from the things of God, when Providence gives us a fair opportunity to speak of them."

2d. Let our conversation be such as to encourage people to open their souls freely to us on the subject of personal religion. Let them see that we understand and love the subject, and can give them counsel and encouragement. Let them never have cause to call in another physician of souls by reason of our ignorance, negligence, or want of sympathy and tenderness. A minister is undone when it comes to that.

3d. In going from house to house, we should avoid as much as possible all conversation about things of a personal character—should frown upon rather than encourage anything like evil speaking, and when we cannot avoid hearing such things, be very particular how we repeat them. The minister will be the first and highest authority for any evil report and marvellous story. Such will, if possible, be laid at his door. "A minister's breast," said an old writer, should be like the old lion's den in the fable, into which many strange things were seen to enter, but out of which none ever returned." The minister, above all men, should be the one to cover over strifes by silence, and not stir them up by repeating the provocations thereof.

4th. Beware of too much conversation about things in dispute between different churches and parties. Take proper pains, in due proportion to their relative importance, to instruct your people in the peculiarities of our Church, but let

it be evident that you are far more anxious to make men christians than churchmen, and that you esteem the great doctrines and duties of religion, more than its forms. Avoid all bitterness in speaking of those who differ from you. The good Melancthon used to long for Heaven for seven reasons ; one of which was, that there he should be delivered from religious controversy. My old preceptor in theology, the good Mr. Addison, of Maryland, so disliked it, that for a long time he could not be induced to take a religious paper, thinking that such ministered to strife. He told me one day, that if a man given to controversy should come to see him on a bright sunny day, and should walk to the window and say, 'bless me, how it is raining,' that he certainly would not contradict him, but would only say, 'well, sir, let it rain.' Hooker's testimony on the subject of religious controversy, is very affecting. Adopting the words of Nazianzen, he says, "my mind leadeth me to fly and to convey myself to some corner out of sight, where I may 'scape from this cloudie tempeste of maliciousness, whereby all parts are entered into a deadly war among themselves, and that little remnant of love that was, is now consumed to nothing. The only godliness we glory in, is to find out something whereby we may judge others to be ungodly. Each other's faults we observe as matter of exprobaton and not of grief." You will be especially tempted to controversy when you first enter on parish duties, and come into collision with opposing ministers and denominations. Some ministers have their whole system of Church polity, and much of their doctrine, changed by such contests. I have heard of one who was very moderate in all his views at the time of his ordination, but by reason of unexpected controversy soon after, was in a few months so revolutionized as to express some doubt whether it was proper to speak to any of those who were not of the true Apostolic Church as he understood it. When you get into such controversy and

permit your opposition to individuals and sects to influence your mind as to their doctrines and practices, you are very liable to become prejudiced against them, no matter how conformable they may be to God's word. The Puritans had their weaknesses and their uncharitableness, on account of which Episcopalians generally have conceived a strong dislike to them as a body, and have often permitted their prejudices to extend to many things which are sound in their doctrine and holy in their practice. We should beware of the same error as to surrounding denominations. Let us love and respect scriptural doctrine and true piety wherever it is found. If any undervalue the doctrines and forms of our Church, and the piety of its ministers and members, let us not follow their example and undervalue them.

ON VISITING THE SICK AND DYING.

There is one occasion of visiting, on the right improvement of which much depends. It is the visitation of the sick and dying. The Church has shown her estimate of its importance by having a special service for it. There the man of God ought to be at home. If he does not love to be in the house of mourning far more than in the house of feasting, he had better lay down his ministry and seek some more congenial occupation. There he should go to be improved, as well as to improve; to have his own heart made better, as well as to comfort the hearts of others. Let me read to you from Smith's Lectures on the Ministry an interesting exhibition of this trait in the ministerial character. It is set forth in an allegory, entitled "Tillan the Merciful." "If the angel of distress or death knocked at any door within his district, the first that heard and the next that knocked was Tillan. At length the hour of his own departure came, and a convoy of angels received his spirit. Borne on their wings he flew towards Heaven, and saw the portals already

open, when a ministering spirit passed them downwards on his way to visit a saint in prison. 'That is like entering this Paradise,' said Tillan, looking wishfully after him, as if he envied him his errand. Angels almost blamed him for having said so, but God immediately ordained him to be a minister of mercy. 'Go,' said he 'and divert that storm which rages on the earth, lest that desert tract before it perish.' 'To do thy will on errands of mercy is the essence of Heaven to me,' said Tillan, as he flew with the speed of a sunbeam to turn the course of the tempest. But hearing the moan of distress as he was passing over a cottage, Tillan, as he was wont, would stop, though but for a moment, to minister consolation to a soul whose painful trial was to cease forever. In that moment, by a sudden commotion of earth and ocean, the desert sunk and perished. Tillan blushed as he returned; angels trembled for his fate, and the first sons of light were afraid to look to the throne of God. But God remembered the habits of Tillan's life, and said, 'Blessed are the merciful.'

Let me not fail to remind you, my young friends, that Christ represents himself as dwelling in the poor, and in prisons, and places of want, and that if we would find him we must go there. It is an easy, and quite an agreeable thing, to go to the house of the great, where all is comfort, and elegance, and refinement, to enter the chamber of the rich and sit beside him as he lies on some bed of down, or reclines on some couch of ease; but to go to the cabin or hovel of want and disease, is another thing. And yet this is the very thing we are enjoined to do—though, of course, not to neglect the rich, who may often be the most pitiable objects, in view of the death and eternity which are at hand. It is ours to hasten to the side of rich and poor.

But we should go to neither unprepared. It is an occasion susceptible of too high improvement to be approached

without due care. "It is somewhat strange," says one, "that ministers who take so much pains for the pulpit, should generally take so little to prepare for this, which is one of the most difficult and important duties of the ministry." It is very desirable to have in readiness a good store of scriptural expressions adapted to the comfort and support of the afflicted. These can easily be collected out of the Bible. We cannot be too tender, and, at the same time, too faithful, so as to do real good to the sick and afflicted and to have the approbation of our own minds afterwards. Now it is that prayer is most soothing and salutary. The prayer should be short, serious, solemn, and adapted to the state of the soul of the sick man and the probability of his death. The prayers of the Visitation Office are excellent, but not always sufficiently expressive of each case, and, therefore, when set forth in our Mother Church, were only recommended when suitable—others being allowed—that is, any which the minister chose to offer, whether his own or those of others. I hope none of you entertain prejudices against extemporaneous prayers on these and similar occasions, where variety and adaptation are required. Besides, that I am well persuaded, with the learned Bingham, that the Apostles and their successors mingled such with the very brief Liturgies in early use; it is a well known fact that the Church of England has never forbidden it even in the pulpit before and after sermon, and that it is the practice of many of her clergy to use it then and on many occasions of social worship, and in their visits to the sick and dying. Bishop Hall's testimony is very strong on this point. "Far be it from me to discourage any one from the use of conceived prayer in their private devotions, and upon occasions also in public I would hate to be guilty also of pouring so much water upon the spirit to which I would gladly add oil rather. No, let the full soul pour itself out in gracious ex-

pression of its holy thoughts into the bosom of the Almighty. What I have professed concerning conceived prayer is that which I have ever allowed and ever practised, both in private and public. God is a free spirit, and so should ours be in pouring out our voluntary devotions upon all occasions. Nothing hinders, but this liberty and a public liturgy should be good friends and go hand in hand together, and whosoever would forcibly separate them, let them bear their own blame. The over vigorous pressing of the Liturgy to the jostling out of preaching and conceived prayers, was never intended by the law makers and moderate governors of the Church." Although other prayers than those of the Prayer Book are but seldom used in our American Church after sermon, there is nothing to forbid it, and as to the liberty of extemporaneous prayer in private or on many occasions of social worship, no attempt has ever been made to interfere with it, and it is believed never will.*

I conclude this lecture by some advices as to the course to be pursued and the language to be used, when the house of sickness becomes the house of death. I have already warned you against committing yourselves to the general practice of funeral sermons, because of their tendency to saint worship, the exaltation of human merit and the doctrine of supererogation. You must not, however, suppose that the dispensing with this practice will of itself do away with all the evils complained of. You may speak privately in such a way as to foster the same false views and contradict all that you have said from the pulpit against relying on death bed repen-

* On the subject of extempore prayers, I once had a conversation with Bishop Hobart, who not only admitted the lawfulness of it, but said he often practised it. On mentioning this to some one I learned that the Bishop was considered as excelling in such devotional exercises at the bed-side of the sick and dying. When it was proposed by one of the Bishops to have more prayers added to the Visitation Office, in order to supply the deficiency thereof, he expressed, in strong language, his surprise that any should require such helps in a sick room.

tances, and about the absolute necessity of a renovated nature, in order to heaven. On no occasion is stern fidelity more needful than on these. It is hard to satisfy surviving friends and relatives. If ministers do not encourage hope, even from the slightest word, look, or sign, friends are sometimes offended. In order to justify christian friends, relatives and ministers in speaking peace to the dying and cherishing hope for the dead, they are strongly tempted to sink down to lower views of religion than the gospel sanctions. Silence, then, though it may sometimes seem to be painfully expressive silence, is the true wisdom and honesty in many cases. If the ministers lead the way, either in private or public, in the utterance of hope or confidence on insufficient grounds, the people will readily follow, and all will become saints in their last moments. I do not say that we are forbidden to speak joyfully and confidently of some, yea, of many. Scripture sanctions it. The dying words and looks of the departed call upon us to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous."

LECTURE XVII.

ON CERTAIN WEAKNESSES AND IMPROPRIETIES WHICH HINDER A MINISTER'S USEFULNESS.

HAVING spoken of things to be said and done, in order to fulfil the pastoral office, I would now caution against some things which should be left unsaid and undone, in order to usefulness in the same. We are poor frail creatures at best. We are of like infirmities with all others. In some things we are more tempted than most others, and being but earthen vessels, are easily broken. I have already stated that there is something in the ministerial office very productive of an undue estimate of ourselves. I have something more to say on that subject in the way of warning, lest this weakness appear in private, as well as public, in the pastor as well as the preacher. As self-righteousness is the besetting sin of Christians in general, so vanity is the besetting sin of ministers in particular. It belongs to the original temperament of some, much more than of others, and is the most obstinate and incurable of all the faults of human nature. It is the more difficult to be known by ourselves, and to be effectually rebuked by others, because it is generally associated with good nature, and other amiable qualities. The vain man is

so self-satisfied, that it is hard to persuade him that all others are not pleased with him. This fault is sometimes generated in the bosoms of ministers who both by nature and grace seemed most free from it. As the continual dropping of water wears away stone, so the continual incense offered to our vanity leads us at length to part with our own first humble opinion of ourselves, and to think that there must be something more than commonly excellent in us. No matter how humble our talents, or how poor our performances, we shall still find some to flatter us, and

“ Praise from the lips of infants,
And of shrivelled bald decrepitude, still is sweet.
Hard it is to say from the very heart,
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name.”

If we cannot find others to admire and praise us, we are tempted to think that it is through ignorance, envy, or some other cause, and we sit down to admire ourselves, like persons alone before some flattering mirror. Horace says, “*Alter alteri satis amplum theatrum sumus. Satis unus, Satis nullus.*” How ashamed would some persons be, if their soliloquies were heard and read by others. Even those who write and preach against the love of human glory, are tempted to wish for the glory of doing it well, and find it hard to bring themselves to the just estimate of it, as taught by the above mentioned poet, who styles it, “*Fama nominis umbra.*” What is fame but a shadow, and should a wise man be ever looking at, and admiring his shadow? “*Let thy face,*” said one, “*shine like that of Moses, to others, but make no looking glasses to thyself.*” It is hard to be so humble as to cast the first stone at ourselves, and not be angry if others follow our example. It is hard to shrink back from notice and practice the precept, “*Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.*” I was conversing with a young man once, on the injunction of the

apostle "not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think," when, to my surprise, I found he regarded it, not as a warning against thinking too highly of himself, but rather as an injunction to think as highly of himself as he ought to think, and not fall below the aim which his talents and graces justified. There are some things told on this subject which ought to fill young ministers with great dread, lest they be deceived by the love of fame. The influence of praise over this principle of vanity is most remarkably exemplified in the case of a Jesuit, who had been employed twenty years in missions, but who owned privately to a friend, that while he did not believe in the existence of a God, he had faced death twenty times for the sake of the religion which he preached to the savages with great success. On his friend representing to him the inconsistency of his zeal; "Ah," replied the missionary, "you have no idea of the pleasure which is felt in commanding the attention of twenty thousand people, and in persuading them to believe what we do not believe ourselves."

But even where there is entire sincerity of belief in the things preached, if the pulpit talents are of high order, the temptation to an undue regard to human applause is so great, that one might be led to say, had we not better draw back from this perilous position, or neglect our gift, and preach less acceptably, and thus avoid the danger. An anecdote told of St. Bernard shall be my answer to this. He also was greatly tempted by the Devil on account of his eloquence, but instead of giving up the ministry to avoid the temptation, he said to the Devil, "I neither began preaching for thee, nor will I make an end for thee." Let me therefore instead of advising you to abandon the thought of the ministry in order to avoid this evil, rather show you what are the temptations to which you are subject, and exhort you to escape them.

1st, In the first place, this vanity shows itself in an undue

desire to be eloquent and admired. A few words, and those the words of others, shall suffice on this point, which has already been somewhat discussed. Kirk White said, "If any man ascend the pulpit with the intention of uttering a fine thing, he commits a deadly sin." St. Augustine mourned to think that in his early ministry he had been so anxious "*ut placeret, non ut doceret.*" Jerome complained of some in his time, "*Id habent curæ, non quomodo scripturarum medullas edant; sed quomodo aures populi declamatorum flosculis mulceant.*" It was said of one of the fathers, that he would often weep at the applause which was given to his sermons. "Would to God;" said he, "they had rather gone away silent and thoughtful." "I love a serious preacher," said Fenelon, "who speaks for my sake, not his; who seeks my salvation, not his own glory." But far above all these is the testimony of St. Paul. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." How hard it is to hide our little selves even behind the glorious Messiah; and even when preaching Christ, to keep from valuing ourselves for so doing.

2dly. This weakness tempts us not merely to prepare fine things for the pulpit, and to show off ourselves, and speak of ourselves while there, to the injury of religion, but it comes down from the pulpit with us, and follows us into private intercourse. Sometimes a minister rather than not say something of himself, will talk of his faults, will perhaps condemn his sermons as poor performances, but evidently in such a way as to draw forth that in which he delights, viz. his own praise, and he will always find some to administer it. The best way is that of Solomon, "neither praise, neither condemn thyself." Better keep yourself and your affairs as much as possible out of view, that something better may be heard and seen. Bishop White and Bishop Griswold were both most remarkable for this in conversation, preaching, and writing. The word *I*

seldom came from their lips or pen. Bishop White would sometimes to the amusement of his readers employ one or more long sentences, in order to avoid using the first person. In this respect it becomes us to deny ourselves and give the preference to our Lord and to others.

3dly. Our vanity shows itself in a way already hinted at, viz. in relying on our talents, so as not to study our sermons with sufficient care to make them effective, and also in wishing to seem to have studied them less than we really have, in order to magnify our genius. I have spoken of the sin of delaying our work either in whole or part until Saturday evening or Sunday morning, and how superficial and defective it must be, however our vanity or the flattering of others may represent it to us. Let me add, what should ever be remembered, that our chief hearer is God himself, who does not like to be served with what costs us nothing. It is also showing disrespect to our people which they are sure to feel. I once heard a vain young minister, after taking his text, say that he had yet to read a commentator on it, and then proceeded to give his own crude views. I heard another, in a more private lecture, say, that while sitting in the room, it had occurred to him that he would speak from a passage which he had never discoursed from before. He then proceeded in an elaborate lecture on a difficult passage, which must have awakened in more than one mind the suspicion, that the subject had not been altogether unstudied by him. I need not say how very unbecoming are such exhibitions of vanity, and how they must sink the ministerial character in the esteem of the wise.

4thly. It sometimes shows itself in the desire to be regarded as very independent and original; in a dread of seeming to follow the direction of any other whatever; in a fondness for differing and debating; for striking out into some new path; in a want of respect for the opinion of the more wise

and experienced. Some will even depart from their real sentiments at times for the mere vanity of seeming independent. There is sometimes the very disgusting assumption of superior wisdom and piety even in young men. A young minister, who was peculiarly beset with vanity, once said to me, that he had never met with that person in the Church, of any party, with whom he agreed; that he had a system entirely his own. Of course he alone was right, and all others wrong. I am far from commending that party spirit which blindly follows some leader or leaders; but, as all men will in reality lean to one or other of the leading parties into which the Church is usually divided, he had better avow it, and not affect this superior wisdom and independence.

5thly. This vanity and over-estimation of ourselves shows itself, on our first entrance upon the ministry, in prompting us to seek a higher station and larger field than we are fitted for. A most important feature in personal holiness is an humble opinion of ourselves. When we think of the ministry, we should feel that we are utterly unworthy of it, and that the very lowest station is too high for us. Instead of seeking high things for ourselves, we should seek them not, but choose the lowest seat, until we are plainly called to a higher. It is the wisest as well as humblest course to choose a small field at first, and by trial learn whether we can cultivate a large one. It often happens that young ministers aim high at first, and reach their aim, but soon find, to their mortification, that they must come down to a lower point. The large field must be relinquished for the small one; the large town church and congregation must be exchanged for the small country parish. Had they attempted less at first, they might have been able to undertake more afterwards. Dr. Doddridge, being offered two situations when he entered the ministry, chose a very obscure one, and, in reply to a fellow pupil, who condoled with him on being buried alive, said: "I can willingly give

up the charms of London—the luxury, the popularity, the company of it,—for the secret pleasures of rational employment and self-approbation. Instead of lamenting it as a misfortune, you should congratulate me on it as a happiness, that I am confined to an obscure village, seeing it gives me so many valuable advantages to the most important purposes of devotion, of philosophy, and, I may add, of usefulness.” The bishops of the Church, at whose disposal the labors of the deacons are placed, have a full opportunity of seeing the working of this principle at the very commencement of the ministerial life. Then, when the young evangelists ought to be willing and glad to go to any part of the earth, with the privilege of preaching the gospel—when their only question should be, “Lord, whither would’st thou have us to go?”—when, if ever, vanity, ambition, and the love of ease, should have no place within them—when the love of souls and the desire of labor should be strong in their hearts—even then do we sometimes find that vanity and selfishness seek the best and largest fields. Nor is it easy to convince them that they may have made an over-estimate of their fitness for the station sought after. No doubt many deceive themselves into the belief that the desire of greater usefulness is the only, or the prevailing motive, for desiring this larger field; but they should remember that there are but few large fields—that the many are small ones; and surely humility should make them say, send us to the smaller ones, and let the larger be reserved for the more experienced. But this evil does not merely show itself in the first choice of a field. After one has been chosen, and found too large or difficult for our management, it is sometimes hard to be convinced of this. Pride often rises up in aid of vanity, to make us refuse to withdraw, after the most decided evidences on the part of our employers that we should do so. How often does it happen that ministers remain in situations for months and years after their usefulness is gone,

and when the cause of religion is languishing, merely because they are unwilling "not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think," or from the weakness of refusing to acknowledge the fact of their being unacceptable. In nothing ought a minister to be more faithful to himself and the cause of religion than in begging his brother ministers and friends to be honest with him in declaring his true standing. The performance of this duty is sometimes the most painful, the most fruitless, and most offensive of all the duties belonging to the Episcopal office. When bishops have most earnestly desired to do a service to unacceptable ministers, by advising them to retire from some position, and thus save them from greater mortification, they have received only upbraidings, and been classed with the enemies of him whom they wished to benefit. I am far from meaning to encourage that critical spirit in the people which makes them hard to please. I am far from saying or thinking, that when some few persons in a congregation are dissatisfied with a minister, either because he has done his duty faithfully, or is not so talented as some would wish, that he must resign; for that would be placing the minister and congregation in the hands and at the mercy of a few persons, and they perhaps injudicious and irreligious ones. I only mean to say, that every minister should desire to know his real capacity, and to find out what is his duty.

6thly. Having thus spoken of the hindrances to our usefulness presented by the indulgence of our own vanity, let me add something on the great evil of flattering the vanity of others, in order to obtain popularity. So strong is this principle in human nature, and so susceptible of being addressed and used by those who wish to gain influence and effect some desired object, that we find the politic and designing in all ages have studied the subject, and practised the art to perfection. Not only candidates for office and honor and fortune study and practise it with the people, the influential and the

wealthy, in whom is the desired favor, but those who wish to please, seeing how grateful this incense is to the human heart, are ever tempted to make free use of it, and to say and do such things as will flatter the vanity of those with whom they associate, leading them to suppose that they and others hold them in high esteem. The longer I live, and the more I see and observe of men, the more I discover of the power of such flattery to effect its object. Even with those who cannot but understand and despise the person offering it, it too often produces some effect, having a friend within to plead its cause. It is oftentimes tried to a great extent in the training of the young, who are sought to be flattered into diligence and obedience by continual and unmerited praises bestowed upon them. Unfortunately and most sinfully is it sometimes even used in the Church of God, and by his ministers, who substitute flattering words, looks, and ways, for the words and works of love issuing from the abundance of the heart. Some ministers preach correctly from the pulpit on the subject of human depravity, comprehending all their hearers in a body in the charge, but do not, in their private intercourse, follow up the charge, by dealing and conversing with each one, so as to continue the impression of guilt sought to be made in the sermon. On the contrary, their whole demeanor, and especially their flattering language, is calculated to awaken a different feeling in the bosom. Nothing can be more inconsistent with our character than this, and nothing better calculated to frustrate the great object of the ministry, which is, to bring men to repentance, and keep them ever in that state,—nothing is more plainly and strongly condemned by the language and conduct of the sacred writers. Instead of “flattering words,” they used “great plainness of speech.” They caution against “prophesying smooth things,” against “speaking peace” where there is no peace, against “seeking our own things,” “our own glory,” instead of the glory of God and the salvation

of souls. Let me warn you against every form of this sin, my young friends, for there is much to tempt God's ministers to it in the circumstances of our Church and country. Not only are ministers tempted to make much use of this potent instrument, in order to secure the favor of their people, but those who would gain influence over their brother ministers, especially over the younger ones, are tempted to resort to this easy and too popular method of securing it. Bishops, also, who would obtain the greatest power, not only over the clergy, but the influential and wealthy laity, are tempted to use the same means of effecting their object. Concerning these and all other purposes for which we use flattering words, or adopt means calculated to make others think well of themselves and of us, I need not say that our holy religion condemns them as sinful. True love to ourselves should lead us to desire to know each one "the plague of his own heart," and to become as humble as possible. To love our neighbor as ourselves in this respect, is faithfully to endeavor to aid him in coming to the same state. If it be wrong in members of the Church to offer incense to the vanity of their minister, and if he should show that he rejects it as false and flattering, much more is it wrong in ministers, either directly or indirectly, in private or public, by word or deed, to encourage any other state of mind in their people than that of deep humility and self-abasement; and this they can and should do without austerity, censoriousness, or any neglect of the kindest and most loving deportment towards them. The love which they have to exercise is especially that love which is "without dissimulation," and which is in fullest exercise when "speaking the truth."

PRIDE A HINDRANCE TO USEFULNESS.

Having thus considered the evils and hindrances to usefulness, growing out of the gratification of our own and

others' vanity, let me mention a species of pride near akin to it, and which sometimes is not a little in the way of a minister's usefulness. It is a jealousy as to the respect due to our office, which makes us stand on too much etiquette and ceremony, as to visits, attention, ceremony, &c. Some ministers, even the younger ones, are extremely sensitive of the least appearance of neglect or disrespect which may be offered them. Now all this should be left to the men of the world. It becomes not the disciple, much less the minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. As to visiting, instead of waiting always for the first visit, and for an invitation, I have often said, that in relation to many persons, especially in country parishes, one visit from the minister without an invitation, or a previous visit, is equal to two, as to the effect upon the person or family visited. Some, indeed, never will see a minister in their houses, unless he is thus forward and uncere- monious in his attentions. A young minister, to whom I gave this advice, told me that he tried it with the most happy effect upon one of the most irreligious persons in his congregation, one whom he was cautioned to avoid as an enemy of all godliness, and particularly opposed to the ministers of the gospel. As to neglects, or evil words spoken of you, if you perceive them, or hear of them, it is often best to be ignorant of the same, and act as though nothing had been said or done, and without any cringing or hypocrisy, try and overcome evil with good. Many a time, by such silence and seeming ignorance, you make a useful friend, whereas, if you notice it, or call him to account for it, or by some significative reserve or distance show that you resent it, you, perhaps, make him your enemy for life. Otherwise, he might in a little while rejoice in the hope that you had never observed it, or heard of it, and be the more anxious to show himself your friend. The contrary spirit to this, one that is easy to take offence, ever looking out for slights, or affronts, is a

most painful one to all our friends, and exposes us to the censure of others.

A MINISTER SHOULD NOT RESENT INSULTS.

Similar advice I would give you in relation to insults or slights offered to you when going from place to place. Never enter into disputes with tavern keepers, servants, porters, stage drivers, or any such persons. Do not show your valiantness in this way. Sir Isaac Newton, in writing to a young English nobleman, who was about to travel in foreign parts, advised him never to resent any insult from such persons, but go on his journey as though nothing had happened, for he certainly would be the loser in the dispute. A christian minister should always be a traveller in foreign parts, and never stop to resent insults. Moreover it is peculiarly his duty to imitate his Master's example for the benefit of others, in this age and country, when even professed followers of Christ are so defective in the virtue of forbearance, so ready not only to return a blow in self-defence, but to deal one in retaliation for an insulting word.

A MINISTER SHOULD NOT BE HARD TO PLEASE.

Nor should a minister be hard to please at taverns or any where else, but take what comes and feel that it is better than he deserves. A blustering minister made it his boast, that on reaching a tavern in company with some ladies, and finding an indifferent dinner gotten for them, and the table cloth not very nice, he called for the landlord and peremptorily ordered him to take dinner, table cloth and all away, and provide something better. Would our Lord or any of the apostles have done so? Another minister in bad health stopped at a tavern very illy supplied with provisions, and being unable to eat or drink any thing that was on the table, or to get any thing else which he asked for, on drinking a glass of water,

found it very pure, and took pains to soothe the feelings of the landlord, by bestowing much praise on the water. You can say which was most proper in a minister. Let me recommend it to you to give as little trouble as possible to servants and house keepers. Some are so little acquainted with good breeding, that they think it a mark of high birth and station, to give as much trouble, and require as much waiting on as possible. I will venture to say, that Bishop White, Griswold, and Judge Marshal, gave as little trouble where they went as any three gentlemen in the United States. There is one piece of neglect whereby some ministers give trouble which I entreat you to avoid. It is not being ready for family prayers, either from lying in bed too long, or being tedious in dressing. I need not say how unbecoming this is in a minister. It is bad enough in others, but unpardonable in him.

LECTURE XVIII.

ON OTHER HINDRANCES TO USEFULNESS.

IMPRUDENCE IN CONVERSATION.

I PROCEED to mention some other things which hinder the usefulness of the ministry. Among these, not the least is imprudence in conversation. "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from trouble." There are some ministers who by idle and imprudent words in the family undo much of the good done by the best sermons in the Church. The great temptation both to ministers and people, is to talk about persons. "Why," said Dr. Rush to some one, "are you always talking about persons? Why do you not talk about things?" The answer is plain. It is so much easier to talk about persons than things. It is so much more gratifying to our evil natures to talk about persons, especially their faults. Any one can talk about persons. A minister therefore should pry as little as possible into the secrets of families, and so he will have but little to carry about from house to house. The minister above all men should be swift to hear what is good of others, and slow to speak what is evil of them. The minister should be

careful in his communications even to his best friends. It is no want of confidence in them, should he keep some things in the very deep of his heart. By intrusting many delicate matters to our friends we sometimes place them in very embarrassing situations, and almost force them to get us into greater difficulties than our enemies could. Sometimes through forgetfulness, at others by surprise, they disclose them. At other times they are so situated that it seems a duty to acknowledge the truth of what has been committed to them. Not to do it, would be to deny it, and thus to violate truth. Many a person has wished that no such secret had been intrusted to him, for there are always some curious and artful persons who are good at finding out secrets.

FONDNESS FOR ARGUING.

Some ministers injure their usefulness not a little by being too much given to arguing. Instead of conversing with their people as if the truth and excellency of religion were admitted, if they have any reason to doubt their belief of Christianity or any of its doctrines, they provoke the utterance of objection in order to answer them. A certain minister for many years visited a family in his parish, where the wife and daughters were truly pious and interesting characters, but the husband and father, though a most amiable and sensible man, was an unbeliever. He was most devoted to them, and did not wish that they should be other than what they were, in their faith and hope. When the minister visited in his family he always joined in religious conversation, as though he were a believer, knelt in prayer, and united in singing. The minister knew that he was an unbeliever, but never uttered a word that could tempt to controversy. The wife also knew it, but never said anything which might bring it to the knowledge of the children: and it was evident that the father did not wish them to know it. After a time a young minister given to dis-

putation succeeded to the parish, and learning that this gentleman was a sceptic, soon drew forth his sentiments to the deep regret of the afflicted mother and hitherto happily ignorant daughters, and contrary to the wishes of the affectionate father. Perhaps this statement may preserve some of you from a similar mistake.

PRECIPITATION IN MAKING CHANGES.

Let me next warn you against an error not very different from the foregoing. It is that of rushing precipitately, without taking time for consideration and inquiry, on improvements and change in the old order of things. When a new teacher takes an old school, or receives scholars from other institutions, nothing is more common than to say, that the boys have been badly instructed, or managed, and must be put on some new and better plan. So it is with many other things, especially with parishes. The new minister is almost sure to find that his parish has been badly managed, or much neglected. Of course he must turn over a new leaf, and correct all the errors of the past. But it may be, that after a time he shall discover, that it is not so easy as he had supposed to manage better than his predecessor had done, and that there are difficulties he had not foreseen in the way of reform. In undertaking at once to condemn the past administration he may also do great injustice to a worthy brother, and grieve those who were attached to him, though he may always find some disposed to join in the complaint. Let him therefore delay not only his censures, but his plans of reform, until he has become better acquainted with all the circumstances of his parish. There is an old saying, not inapplicable to this matter, "that a new broom sweeps clean, but the old one knows where the dust lies." Nor is it so easy to get at the dust with either the old or the new, as some young ministers are apt to imagine. I would not say anything to

discourage the zeal of a young minister, and I know too that it is better to begin some changes at once. I only wish to put his zeal under the guidance of knowledge, and thus preserve it from injurious mistakes. I would preserve young ministers from the appearance of presumption, and the sin of fault-finding without due cause, each of which must injure their usefulness. I ask your attention to the following testimonies. "Hasty changes," says the Bishop of Winchester, "are seldom productive of the advantage expected. They are looked upon with suspicion, and considered as the forerunners of more extensive innovations." "I have ever considered," said Mr. Beacherot, "the great temptation to a young minister to be his activity. Up and be doing is his motto. This was once my own case—a sort of restlessness because things did not go on fast enough." "Youth," said Mr. Cecil, "is the peculiar season of precipitation. The young man's motto is onward. There is no such effectual cure for this, as experience." This precipitation is often seen in urging right things too earnestly. Mr. Scott thus writes to his sister: "I was much too earnest and in a hurry with you, said too much, went too far, and thus out of my abundant love surfeited you. Forgive me this wrong. It was well meant, ill judged, and worse received." "Do nothing in haste," said the same. "Pray, pray, pray, before you determine." Legh Richmond's biographer says, "when he met with opposition, he did not hazard the failure of his measures by indiscreetly urging them, but rather left his arguments silently and gradually to produce their effect. Circumspection and caution marked every part of his conduct, his great aim being at all times to give no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed."

TOO MUCH ANXIETY AS TO SALARIES.

Let me now offer you a few words of counsel on a subject in which a wrong course has brought much reproach

upon the ministry and the cause committed to it, viz: what ministers say and do in regard to their salaries. Anxiety about earthly things, even in the matter of food and raiment, is forbidden to all Christians, as being characteristic of the heathen. How much more is it unbecoming those whose duty and constant practice it is to warn all men against this fault. Of any and every covetous man it is declared in God's word that there is not a more wicked thing on earth—that God abhorreth such. How much more when that man is, emphatically, by consecration and profession, *a man of God*, to whom St. Paul says, “thou, O man of God, flee these things.” Should it be thought and said there is no need of such caution in these times, when the support of God's ministers is so meager? we might answer, still less was it necessary in the first days of the Gospel, when the support was yet more meager. Nevertheless, God saw fit to give it for their sakes, and, doubtless, for ours also. The very scantiness of our support is a temptation to uneasiness of mind and to complainings and misconduct on our part. God has most wisely determined that his ministers in this world should be poor. Not only to the poor, but, for the most part, by the poor is the Gospel preached. He requires it of his ministers to set an example of that trust in him, of that economy, simplicity, temperance, and self-denial which they are bound to inculcate on others. A greater calamity could not befall the Church of God than the wealth of her ministry. Some have even entered the sanctuary for the sake of the small piece of bread it had to give—and what numbers of the ungodly would rush in if even a comfortable maintenance were certainly insured to them. The love of souls, not the love of money, should be the great moving principle. To do good, not to live comfortably, should be the desire and happiness of God's ministers, after the example of Him who went about doing good, and making it his meat and drink to do his Fa-

ther's will. Anxiety on this account, and the seeking out some field of labor with reference to it, is peculiarly unpromising and suspicious in a young minister. He, especially while under the influence of his first love and zeal, should rejoice in the privilege of laboring any where, and for the least compensation which could suffice the wants of nature. Archbishop Secker says, "a due measure of disinterestedness is one main requisite for the success of a minister's labors. I seek not yours, but you should be his principle." Mr. Grimshawe said to his people, "I will not deserve your curses when I am dead for what I have received for my poor labors among you. I want no more of you than your souls for my God, and a bare maintenance for myself." If a minister, by importunity or extravagance, or by reason of his talents, which might obtain for him a more lucrative place, shall succeed in drawing from his congregation more than is necessary for his comfortable subsistence among them, and so as to be burthensome to some of them, it is given reluctantly, and the minister suffers in their estimation.

A minister should live plainly, and never run in debt: a minister ought not to wish to live as the rich of his charge do: he should rather live below than above the average of his congregation. Some rich and conscientious laymen act on this principle, setting an example of economy and plainness, and not tempting their poor neighbors to extravagance. How much more should ministers act thus. In order to avoid debt, or being a burthen to others, a minister should, from the first, avoid things in dress, furniture, living, &c., above his means, but carefully study, by the use of plain common sense and observation upon others, how to economize and live on little. Without anything like meanness or uncomeliness, some persons, by a proper choice and use of clothes, will appear decent and respectable on less than one-half required by others. The same may be said of all other things. Some can do, and do

well, without many things which others think they must have. Some will take care of what they have, so as to preserve them for years instead of months, and thus, no matter what their means, always live within them, and have something *for* charity; while others always live beyond their income, no matter what it is—are, of course, always in debt, and live in some measure *on* charity. The same may be said as to those having families. Some will live on five hundred dollars per annum; while others, in the same circumstances, and with the same number to provide for, will scarcely live on a thousand. Let it not be said that the mistress of the house must see to this. The minister is bound, by the command of God and his ordination vows, to rule his own household; and if he has been so unwise or so unfortunate as to marry an improvident, wasteful, or vain woman, he must prevent the effects of this mistake by his own attentions. Certain it is, that after a congregation has contributed a reasonable allowance to the support of a minister and his family, if that does not suffice, little sympathy will be felt for him in any troubles to which his own mismanagement or extravagance may have brought him. Let me exhort to the strict observance of one rule, as a means of preserving you from such trouble:—never run in debt; never exceed your means of payment; wear your old clothes as long as decency will allow, and get very plain and coarse ones, if you cannot get better; live on the simplest fare that can sustain life and health, and teach your family to do the same, rather than run in debt for better things without the means of payment. A minister, without means on which to draw for the payment of his debts, is not acting honestly when he contracts them. One word more on the subject of salaries. Be very careful as to the manner in which you complain of failure or tardiness in the payment of them. Do not speak of it from house to house, so as to subject yourself to the charge of being unduly anxious about it. At proper

times, and in a proper manner, speak or write to proper persons about it, making an accurate statement of their deficiencies and your wants, so that if you should be obliged to leave your charge, it may not be said that due warning had not been given. It sometimes happens that ministers neglect to inform the proper persons of their real condition, and suddenly relinquish their charge, on account of straitened circumstances, to the injury of the congregation and the cause of religion.

CONDUCT OF MINISTERS AS TO AMUSEMENTS, &c.

I speak next on a subject about which it is more important that our ministers should think and act correctly than those of any other communion, because many of them and their people have, in times past, erred therein more than others. It is the subject of amusements, parties, &c. In consequence of the wealth, station, intelligence, and other circumstances of a large portion of our people in England and America, they have been more exposed to this temptation than to most others, and unfortunately have yielded to it so much as to injure their own souls, the cause of religion generally, and the reputation of our Church in particular. Thousands, in times past, have left the communion of our own and mother Church, because of her worldly ministers and pleasure-loving people. Since her great change, by the instrumentality of Newton, Scott, Wilberforce, Hannah More, Legh Richmond, Simeon, and such like, the reproach has, in a good degree, been rolled away. But still there is reason enough why our ministers should, both by preaching and example, be more particular than any others, that so the Church and religion may suffer no damage. I do not for a moment suppose that any of you are at all in doubt as to the impropriety of the dance, the card table, the ball-room, or even large, expensive, and fashionable assemblies, where such things are not. My

object is to suggest the proper course to be pursued by you in avoiding and condemning such places ; for there must be not only avoidance, but decided condemnation, or our very silence will be adduced in their behalf. As to those clergymen, or even private Christians, who plead the necessity of such things for recreation of body and mind, Massillon well says, that " they are ordinarily those who have the least need of them—those who most neglect their duty, and the employments belonging to their vocations." A minister of God's word, attentive to his duty, and fond of it, will neither have leisure for such amusements, nor a liking to them. The great snare to some is the fearing to offend, and the desire to please, the world, by certain concessions and compliances. Quesnel says, " That man is mistaken who thinks to gain upon the world by conformity to its manners and fashions. The world will much sooner corrupt the heart which opens itself thereto." As to the world, says Mr. Bridges, " to be able to attach it to ourselves, while the Master whom we serve is still to them a despised and rejected object, should be a matter of far more alarm than self-complacency. Woe be unto them of whom all men speak well." The world loves its own ; and when it loves a minister, he should tremble lest he be of the world. The only way for a minister to have a clear conscience, and to make any effectual opposition to such things, is privately and publicly, and on all suitable occasions, to use the most decided language, and pursue the most decided course, in regard to them, so as to leave no one in doubt as to his sentiments. Some excuse themselves from speaking or preaching about such things, by saying that we must aim at the hearts of the people ; that if they be right, all else will be right, and these things will be relinquished of course. Such was not St. Paul's opinion or practice. He preached to the heart as much as ever a minister of God did, and yet he preached against " revellings, banquetings, and such like things," warning

against every inconsistency and sin to which Christians are tempted. But as I am now speaking of your personal behavior, and not of what you are to preach, I will not pursue that farther. If invited to any place or company where you have reason to think that cards or dancing, or anything improper, will be introduced, you will of course decline. Should you unexpectedly, as at a wedding, find such things about to be introduced, and your opinion be asked, and permission sought, you should not, as is sometimes done, speak timidly and doubtfully, but express yourself, though in a mild and dignified manner, yet with firmness and decision ; and if that is of no avail, then withdraw, and afford no countenance to it by your presence. Let it be seen that you are entirely opposed to such things. A little decision in one or two instances, on your first entrance on the ministry, will save you much trouble afterwards. I would add, that all large parties, whether dinner or tea parties, should be avoided by ministers. They are places of feasting and vain conversation, where the man of God ought not to feel himself at home. A minister who loves such places will be often invited to them, but will not be respected as a minister by those who invite him, or meet him there. The impression will be made, that he loves the house of feasting more than the house of mourning.

ON THE GREAT TEMPERANCE TO BE OBSERVED BY MINISTERS.

Having warned you against feasts, I feel it a duty to say something on the subject of that temperance which is so becoming in a minister at all times, but especially when visiting his people from house to house. To a minister, indeed, visiting his people, in many parts of this country, every dinner is a feast, and every table a snare, and if he be a man given to appetite and fond of dainties, he must watch and pray against the temptation which is before him. Such is the hospitality of our abundant country, and such the pres-

sing entreaties of parishioners to eat of everything and to eat abundantly, that the danger of exceeding the bounds of temperance is very great. And, moreover, I must tell you, that notwithstanding all this kindness, should the minister indulge freely and evidently delight himself in the dainties spread before him, and especially should this in any degree become habitual with him, it cannot fail to be observed, and, by some, spoken of to his disadvantage. Yes, there are instances where even those who have urged him to free indulgence, have afterwards made a jest of that compliance, and spoken of him as an epicure and glutton.

THE COURSE TO BE PURSUED AS TO INTOXICATING DRINKS.

Perhaps something may be expected here on the subject of drinking—one much agitated at this time in the Christian world. Some ministers by the course which they have pursued in relation to it, have hindered their usefulness not a little. As to the use of distilled spirit, that unhappy discovery of later ages, would it be too much to say, that after all the evil it has done, after all the disclosures of that evil, after all the efforts of good men to banish the use of it from among us, the minister who so far braves public opinion as to persist in the use of it, except it be for strictly medicinal purposes, is in the most imminent danger of falling a victim to it. How many melancholy examples, in all the churches of our land, might be adduced in proof of this! In respect to wine, while freely admitting the abstract lawfulness of using it, and condemning all denunciations of those who choose to exercise their liberty in relation to it, I am still persuaded that in this present state of the world, of our country, and our Church, and having a proper regard for the safety of those who are in danger of intemperance, and for the opinions of the great numbers who now discountenance all use of intoxicating liquor, it is better to refrain altogether from either

using it as a beverage or offering it to others. The contrary practice, in opposition to the opinions and wishes of many of the truest friends to religion, has, I am persuaded, in many instances proved an hindrance to ministerial usefulness.

THE USE OF TOBACCO.

To what is said as to wine and strong drink, I would add a few words concerning another discovery of modern times, without which, for more than five thousand years, mankind lived in comfort ; and yet I fear, from long experience, that there is little hope of effecting any good, even by many words. You will at once understand that my allusion is to a most noxious, but too popular plant, the native growth of our own land. If all that physicians have testified, and all that the victims of its use bear witness against it—if the defilement of garments—if the pollution of houses—if the desecration of churches, be unavailing to induce those who feel and acknowledge its evil effects to desist from it, what can I say that is likely to prevail? Nevertheless, I will leave with you these few words:—1st. Calculate the time and money thus expended, and ask yourselves whether you are justified in so doing, especially when you are preaching against needless indulgences. 2dly. When you are reasoning with any of your fellow-sinners on the subject of some evil habit, showing how the yielding to it leads to the enslaving of the whole man, and perhaps to the destruction of both soul and body in hell, remember that he may reply, “Physician, heal thyself,” and you be speechless, because conscious that you are under the dominion of what you feel to be an evil habit, injurious to health, and wasteful of time and money. 3dly. Remember you may one day be fathers, and think now whether you will wish your sons to follow this example, and whether to all other expenses of their education you will be prepared to add another so serious as this. And, lastly,

let me remind you, and all others in this seminary, that there is near at hand an institution dear to us all, where the Church is seeking to train up her children in all good and holy habits, and where the parents and teachers unite in the endeavor to preserve them from this most injurious and unbecoming one. Think on the effect of your example to the contrary, when they shall, for their justification, point their teachers to you, who have, by your profession, renounced all that is evil, and devoted yourselves to the improvement of mankind, by setting before their eyes the models of every virtue in your own lives, as well as sermons. Will they not think the restriction hard? and, should they seek to violate the rule, will not those of you (if there be such who may indulge in the habit under consideration) feel that you have contributed to their transgression, and to all the trouble and unhappiness it may bring with it?

ON THE SUBJECT OF MARRIAGE.

I am now about to conclude these lectures by a few remarks on a subject in which the happiness and usefulness of the ministry is deeply involved. According to the prudence or imprudence, the good or ill success with which it is managed, it is a great help or hindrance to the ministry. When very unfortunately conducted, I have sometimes thought it became one of those cases in which there was a justifiable cause for laying down the ministry. Some such cases doubtless there have been. Need I say that the subject alluded to is marriage. The scripture speaks of marriage not only as honorable in all men, but as a relation belonging to the ministry. But then, it must be, "in the Lord." The character of the wife is as distinctly traced, as that of the minister whose wife she is. It would be well for the Church, if there was something like a private form of ordination, by which those who are disposed to become helpmeets to the

minister, might try themselves, and see whether they are prepared for their undertaking. It is made the duty of ministers in solemnizing the nuptials of all others, to counsel them to enter on this holy estate "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God," "that they may so live together in this life, as in the world to come, to have life everlasting." How does it behove them, then, to set an example in this, seeing that so much, not only of their own happiness, but of the usefulness and honor of the ministry depends on it. The Church of Rome has thought to avoid all danger from the mismanagement of it, and from other supposed inconveniences from the very relation itself, by abolishing it altogether, as to the clergy. But in attempting to be wiser, and to do things better than God, it has filled itself with abominations, far worse than even unholy and unhappy marriages. Our Church, following the word of God and practice of the Apostolic Church, takes it for granted as a general rule, that her ministers have, or will have families, and requires a solemn promise at their ordination, that they will rule them well, judging that if they cannot, or do not govern their own households, they are not fit to be intrusted with the management of the house of God. A failure in the choice of a suitable partner, and in the good government of a household, is much noted and spoken of in the case of a minister. It is even said, and often said, and in some instances, I fear, truly said, that some ministers show less of wisdom and self-command in their choice of wives, than the men of the world, or at any rate, than the laity of the Church; that they seem to yield to mere taste and fancy and personal recommendations, more than many of other avocations in life. However true this may be of some of God's ministers, I feel it my duty to testify in relation to almost all those with whom I have been, and am acquainted, whether in this or other dioceses, that God hath most remarkably

blessed them with discreet, pious, and suitable companions, who are a support and comfort to their husbands, in all the duties and trials of the ministry. But my young friends, as there is danger, as some do mistake, as others are scarcely rescued from the snare, into which their own imprudence was leading them, let me deliver to you a few cautions on the subject.

1st. Be not in too great haste to marry or make engagements. Take time for consideration and consultation. Let judgment, and conscience, and religious principle, and prayer, have their full share in deciding your choice. Do not trust to the first appearances and exhibition of character. You will not understand me as condemning all reference to the feeling of love, as denying that there is a sympathy and congeniality of character most important to conjugal happiness, and which must be consulted. I only warn you against drawing your standard from novels, poets, and sentimental writers, as weak young men and women do, to the ruin of their peace and comfort through after life. Do not rush into matrimony on your first entrance upon the ministerial life. Wait until you can form a proper estimate of your own abilities, and ascertain what station you will be able to get, and to retain. Some, by neglecting this, have chosen companions who were inferior to those, with whom they were afterwards to associate, and have become ashamed of them ; while others have succeeded in securing those who were doomed to the mortification of seeing their husbands sink instead of rise, and of being obliged to sink with them to the great unhappiness of both, and to the disappointment of friends. Wait, therefore, until you have found your proper level, and then choose one to suit yourself, and those with whom you are both to associate.

2nd. Beware lest you be overcome by the power of exquisite mental culture, great refinement of sentiment and

manners, and high birth and interesting connection, even though associated with sincere piety. Some very valuable helpmeets to ministers have been found in such associations, and with such exquisite qualities; but the lap of luxury is not the place on which to nurture a soldier's wife. Now the minister is one who has to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and who must follow his great Captain from land to land, and his wife must be ready to go with him, to the camp and to the field, whether the war be in our own, or other lands. Some sad mistakes have been made in this way. At a very early period of my ministry an eminent christian lady gave me the following narrative of what had passed before her eyes. A young minister of fine promise, as to talents and zeal, from one of our largest cities, came soon after his ordination to visit some friends in another of our largest cities; having previously accepted a call from one of the first congregations of his own city. His preaching was much admired by the crowds who thronged to hear him. Not less admired was he in those rich and refined families to which he was introduced. In one of them was a young lady of great personal charms, high mental culture, and perhaps of some religious sensibility. She was the idol of her family and connections. She had been from her birth accustomed to every elegance, and enjoyment, and gratification. A mutual attachment was formed. An engagement took place. The young minister visited the flock he had engaged to tend, made engagements for his speedy settlement with them, returned and was married. When the time came to take leave of family and friends, the heart of his companion failed, and friends could not part with her so soon. A few weeks, surely, could not make much difference with his congregation. The young minister yielded, and made some excuse to his waiting congregation. At the end of a few weeks, his wife was still more unwilling to go, and he less anxious.

Still he promised to fulfil his engagement. Weeks, however, and then months rolled on, while some excuse still was found for delay. The issue of it all was, that the rich relations of his wife provided for him, and he was lost to the ministry.

3rd. Let me caution against a snare into which some fall, viz: that of seeking a fortune, together with a wife, so as to be free from all anxiety about the support of a family. I once heard a young man, now no more, quote John Newton as advising to this, in order that the minister might give himself up entirely to his work, and let the wife's fortune take care of her and the children. I know not in which of his writings this advice is to be found, or whether it was correctly quoted, but I am sure it is bad advice, come from whom it may. A more ruinous church establishment cannot be imagined, than one, where every minister marries a wife who can support herself and children without any care or trouble to the husband and father. The Church would never want for ministers of some sort on this plan. So far from the wife's fortune leaving the minister entirely to the work of the ministry, it would oftener take him from it, in order to manage, and perhaps increase it. Wealth, as well as knowledge, is power. Too often, the wife not only feels, but exercises the power which she possesses in her property. The minister is apt either to be subject to the wife, or to be too much taken up with the property. The best fortune is in the wife herself. If she is prudent, economical, diligent in attending to her children and household, the minister has in her without a farthing, a richer treasure, than in one with thousands of silver and gold, and with the abundance of other possessions, if destitute of such qualifications. Of course I do not mean to say that the possession of any property is of itself a disqualification for the relation of which we are speaking, but only, that a fortune is generally rather a hindrance than a help, a thing to be avoided rather than sought for.

LECTURE XIX.

ON THE ORDINATION VOWS AND PREVIOUS SUBSCRIPTION.

HAVING now considered the main points belonging to the character, conduct and instructions of a preacher and pastor as he goes in and out amongst his people, I proceed in this my last lecture to speak of an interesting season which is at hand, and a solemn transaction belonging to it, in which you are most deeply concerned. I allude to the time and act of your ordination. You must then publicly declare your belief that God hath called you to the work of the ministry, and promised that, by his grace, you will perform the same with fidelity. Previous, however, to the solemn ceremony, you will be required to subscribe the following declaration. "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrines and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States." I need not say to you, that these things should be well weighed, long before hand. The Church at different times of the year offers up special prayers for you, to the intent that you may come to this ordinance well prepared; and

surely it ought to be a subject of much prayer, and conscientious self-examination to yourselves. I will not for a moment question your sincerity, by urging you at this late period to inquire whether you can make the vows and subscription honestly and conscientiously. But I may advise you to examine fully into their true design and extent, that you may act your part with a clear understanding of the vows and promises required, and with a hearty assent to the same. My remarks will be chiefly directed to the subscription. That, not being in the ordination service, or any public transaction, but of a private nature, is not so likely to exercise your mind or conscience beforehand, unless specially presented to your consideration. I fear it is often neglected.

As to the first part of it, little surely can be required in the way of explanation. A declaration of belief in the Holy Scriptures, as the revealed word of God, supposes and requires that we have all read them, and fully satisfied ourselves of their truth, by a thorough examination, and that being thus satisfied, we receive them as infallible; receive them, as we do no other teaching, but give up ourselves to their guidance according to the best understanding we can obtain of their meaning. If admitted to the second grade of the ministry, you will then be required to promise, that you will teach nothing as necessary to salvation, which is not to be read in these scriptures, or may not be proved thereby. This being so plain, I pass on to the remainder of the declaration, viz: the solemn engagement to "conform to the doctrines and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States." You will observe that the subscription is not to the doctrines and worship of the Primitive Church, or of the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world, nor yet of the English Church, though she be our own beloved Mother Church; but to those of the Episcopal Church in America, as revised and altered by our General Convention. It may be well to con-

sider the history of this subscription. A reference to that in the English Church will greatly aid us. In that Church, before the candidate is received into the ministry, he must, besides acknowledging the king's supremacy, subscribe a declaration that "the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of bishops, etc., containeth in it nothing *contrary to the word of God.*" He must also at the same time subscribe another declaration, viz: "that the Book of Articles (which is a separate book) is, in all, and every of them, *agreeable to the word of God.*" Besides this, he must for the purpose of securing uniformity of worship, privately before the bishop subscribe a promise to "conform to the liturgy of the Church of England," and must publicly in the Church, on taking charge of a congregation, declare "his unfeigned assent and consent to all that is contained in the Book of Common Prayer." An in animo subscription to the articles, as *agreeable to the word of God*, and to the Prayer Book as *not contrary to it*, and a promise to conform to the latter, constitute the two subscriptions in the English Church. Our subscription differs from it in this, that instead of affirming the articles to be agreeable to the word of God, and the Prayer Book not contrary to it, it simply declares a belief in the word of God, itself, and then promises conformity to the doctrines and worship of the Episcopal Church. This doctrine and worship of course refer to the articles, liturgy, and offices of the Prayer Book, which form but one book with us. Although the subscription is one, it yet refers to two things, which as their history and character show, have somewhat different objects in view, the one being designed to promote soundness and uniformity in doctrine; the other, though necessarily embracing doctrine also, yet has specially in view the promotion of piety and uniformity in worship. It must be evident also that the one was mainly, though not exclusively designed for the clergy, while the other was equally for the clergy and laity. That the articles were specially designed for the establishment of

doctrine is evident from their very title in the English Church which runs thus,—“For the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of concert touching true religion.” It may also be seen in the language in which they have ever been spoken of. Bishop Burnet calls them “the sum of our doctrine and the confession of our faith.” Bishop Hall calls them “a complete body of divinity.” Bishop Tomline “the criterion of the faith of the members of the Church of England.” Other writers call them, “the doctrine,” “the articles on doctrine,” “the articles on public doctrine.” And Bishop Whitgift says, “the articles, liturgy and canons,” are the “*Doctrina, Cultus et Disciplina*” of the English Church. When therefore we find our Church in her required subscriptions distinguishing between doctrine and worship, we can have no difficulty in referring the one, mainly at least, to her articles, and the other to the liturgy, offices, &c. It is not however, meant to be affirmed that the mere use of the liturgy in all its parts, without assenting to the doctrine which is necessarily contained therein, would satisfy the demand of the latter part of the subscription. A conscientious mind must revolt from this. Any one believing that the liturgical part of our Prayer Book, is really contrary to the word of God, cannot with a good conscience promise conformity to our worship, and therefore ought not to enter our ministry, just as one who believes that the articles are not agreeable to the word of God, ought not to sign a promise of conformity to our doctrine. The main design of the articles and other parts of the Prayer Book should be well considered. They are evidently the great test of the soundness of candidates for orders, and of those who are in orders, when suspected of unsoundness. In deciding this most important, and at the same time delicate question, the bishops and others to whom the duty belongs, need something as precise and clear as possible. If the other parts of the Prayer Book not only contained all the

doctrine of the Church, but exhibited it in a sufficiently clear manner to answer the purpose of a satisfactory test, then would the articles be unnecessary, nor would they ever have been adopted. The very nature and object of the other parts of the Prayer Book, and the history of the articles, prove the insufficiency of the former, and the necessity of the latter for the purpose above mentioned. Valuable as is this liturgy for the promotion of soundness and uniformity in the faith, as well as in the worship, by the constant use of a form of sound words which it provides, still for the purpose of deciding on departures from the doctrine of the Church, something more definite and dogmatic is required. A head is necessary to every body. An umpire must be appointed in every well ordered society to settle differences. Now our Prayer Book is a body made up of several parts. It is a society consisting of different members. Each one cannot answer for every purpose. The articles cannot serve for the purpose of common prayer, and the administration of the sacraments. Neither can the liturgy and offices suffice for the purpose which the articles were designed for; else as already said, they would not have been added. Being adopted for the express purpose of settling differences and producing uniformity of sentiment on certain points, whatever is treated of formally and definitely in the articles, must be resorted to, as explanatory of what is alluded to, either incidentally or devotionally in other parts of the Prayer Book, when differences of opinion arise. If there be anything not treated of in the articles, which is found elsewhere, then of course it must be its own interpreter in due subordination to the word of God. An important question however now arises, which every conscientious candidate should well consider. It is this. How far does this subscription bind us? Even the Bible, the infallible word of God, can only be conscientiously subscribed, according to our honest understanding of it, so far as we undertake to comprehend it.

Very diligent, candid and learned students of it have ever differed somewhat in their understanding of certain things contained in it, though subscribing absolutely to its entire truth. The composition of fallible men, whether individuals or churches, must also admit of different interpretations, and are themselves actually, and by their own acknowledgement, more or less imperfect, for they all renounced the claim of infallibility, except the Church of Rome. The Church of Rome subscribes to her standards, just as we do to the Bible, in the most unqualified manner. Not thus do we subscribe the decisions and interpretations of the Church. In subscribing to any human arrangement or digest of God's word, we do it with the conviction that there may be some error in it. In subscribing it, we may also claim for its language "such just and favorable construction-as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings." See Preface to the Prayer Book.

Let us then endeavor to ascertain the true design and intent of this requirement, by considering some of the views which have been taken of it.

1st. Some have said that our Articles were only Articles of peace, and that the subscription only binds us to forbear speaking or preaching against the doctrines set forth in them. This is contradicted by the whole history of the Articles, and is too discreditable to the Church to be admitted for a moment. As well turn our ministry into a society of Jesuits at once. Why not say that our promise of conformity to the word of God, is only a promise not to speak or preach against its doctrines.

2dly. Others have said that we may sign them not as containing any distinct propositions to be understood by us, in the literal grammatical meaning of the words used, but to have just that sense put upon them which we think most agreeable to our understanding of the word of God. In

other words, it amounts to a mere subscription to the Bible. Of what use, then, are the Articles, and why does the Church first require a belief in the Bible and then a promise of conformity to her view of doctrine? It is evident that we are to consider these two things separately, as well as in their connection with each other. The Church has drawn up a certain system of doctrine for a certain purpose, believing it to be in unison with scripture, and requires of us before we can enter her ministry to subscribe to this as well as to the Bible. The course of duty is plain. We must first do homage to God's word by studying it; then the doctrine of the Church; and if we conscientiously believe that the latter agrees with the former, then we can honestly subscribe it; if otherwise, we should not seek her ministry.

3dly. There be some, a very few it is to be hoped, who say that we may sign them in almost any possible sense which can be put upon the words. This most extravagant and licentious interpretation, I need not tell you, has of late been advocated by some who even maintain that we may interpret them so as to make them to agree with the doctrine of the Council of Trent, and that, therefore, it is not necessary to leave the Protestant Episcopal Church in order to adopt the Creed of Rome. I will not insult your understandings, or doubt your honesty, by urging this point.

4thly. Others have erred on the opposite side by saying that such a subscription is binding for life. This is like the reasoning of some of our old ministers during the revolutionary war, who having once promised allegiance to the King of England, and subscribed to the English Prayer Book, which requires prayers to be offered up for him, thought they could never be absolved from the obligation. Had they been in England and been receiving the king's bounty, or a living in the Church, of course they could not have ceased to act according to their promise, but in the altered circumstances

of their case, they were surely at liberty to act otherwise if preferring America to England. So, when ministers cease to believe as once they did, that is, at the time of their subscription, they have only to lay down their ministry or expect to be displaced by those in authority. If this be not the correct view of it, then are all subscriptions sinful, since no man can say that he will never change his opinion.

5thly. There is one other class which is disposed to strain the obligation of conformity too far, even beyond what is possible to the human mind in its present imperfect state, and, therefore, it could never have been expected by the framers of the Articles and Services, or the authors of the subscription. It were as impossible to bring all persons to precisely the same uniformity of mental vision, as to bring a large number of watches to the same exact time. Charles the Fifth tried both and failed in both. Much as the leaves of the same tree resemble each other, and many as those leaves in the forest are, no two can be found precisely the same. That some difference must needs exist in the various mind of man as to the understanding of our formularies, is unavoidable, from their very nature, variety, and length. Let us remember how many and difficult the subjects treated of in our Articles, how many our Prayers and for how many occasions, and how lengthy our Homilies and on what a variety of topics they speak. How is it possible that perfect uniformity of thought could exist in all the minds of our ministers as to every expression in all of these? The history of our Church in England and America is against it. The best expounders of our standards differ somewhat among themselves, and allow the same liberty to others. Bishop Burnet's exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles is now, and ever has been, I believe, the most generally approved one. Our house of Bishops recommends it to all candidates. You have carefully studied it, and, therefore, know what latitude he allows in the interpreta-

tion of some of them, especially those on the divine decrees and the descent of Christ into hell. In relation to the Homilies, also, which are recommended in one of the Articles as containing "a godly and wholesome doctrine," the approval of every word and expression and use of scripture, has never been required, but only a hearty acceptance of the doctrines which are plainly set forth in those admirable sermons. See Bishop Burnet on the article concerning them.

But now, lest by these general remarks I should seem to advocate too much latitude in the interpretation of our standards, let me say, that I refer not to those great doctrines which enter into the very essence of our religion, but to minor and more doubtful points, about which there ever has been, and must be, some diversity of sentiment. By an examination of these documents, we shall readily perceive that as in the Bible there are some commandments greater, and some matters weightier, than others, so in all of these there are some truths ever coming first, or laying at the foundation, about which there must be agreement,—if not absolutely perfect agreement, yet essential, substantial agreement, or else there cannot be a conscientious subscription. In a few words, let me state what these are.

1st. The doctrine of the Trinity, which, in the Articles, Liturgy, Offices, and Homilies, is written as with a sunbeam. This is the subject of our first five articles. In all the other parts of the Prayer Book, and in the Homilies, it has also a prominence which shows the estimate in which it was held; so that to deny it is to deny the faith.

2dly. The word of God, as our only rule of faith, and the great instrument of conversion and sanctification. In the sixth and eighth articles, it is treated of as the rule of faith. In the first homily, its uses and excellencies are fully set forth. In our morning service, which is the first part of the Prayer Book, large portions of scripture are read. The offices are

full of the word; the sacraments are sanctified by the word of God and prayer. It is the very life and soul of our Psalms and Hymns.

3dly. The doctrine of the fall, man's deep depravity, his need of the Holy Spirit, of the atonement of Christ, of justification by faith, and of good works following after. These are set forth in several succeeding articles, and hold the same relative position in the Homilies and Prayer Book, being dwelt upon in all of them with an emphasis which cannot be mistaken.

4thly. After these, we have the external ordinances of Christ's Church—that is, the ministry and sacraments. If we examine the Liturgy and Offices, the Articles and Homilies, we shall find this order observed in regard to these also.

5thly. We shall then find, in all of these standards, some other things treated of, growing out of the preceding, and highly important, though still not of equal rank with them.

And now I would ask, who is there, thus examining these several standards, but must perceive, that the doctrine of man's deep corruption in the sight of the holy and ever blessed Trinity, making it necessary to have such a Saviour as Jesus Christ; the embracing Him by faith unto justification, through the teaching and help of the Holy Ghost; is the great doctrine of our Church, as it is of the Bible. The justification of a penitent sinner, through the instrumentality of such a faith, was evidently the leading doctrine of the Reformation, the "*Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*," according to Luther. "*If this be lost, then all is lost*," said that great reformer. So also did the enemies of the Reformation regard and declare it. But for the corruption of this great doctrine, there might have been no Reformation. It was felt by those who were raised up of God, to restore lost truth to his Church, that the denial of this doctrine, or the overshadowing it with, or superseding it by, some other things, made another gospel.

This, then, they laid at the foundation, as did the apostle Paul, and admitted no other. On this they reared their superstructure of good works and ordinances, according to the scripture. This was the great central truth around which all others revolved, and by which all others were kept in their proper place. Any thing not built on this foundation, or revolving around this centre, must, sooner or later, fall to the ground or fly off, producing mischief and ruin. In every science and art there is some leading principle, and in every machine some main spring or wheel. In the gospel, and in the Church, this doctrine answers to these ends. Let this be withdrawn, and what will ensue but lifeless forms or abominable idolatries? To declare our belief in the Bible, then, and to promise conformity to the doctrines of the Church, and not receive this with the whole heart and mind, what is it but that the blind undertake to lead the blind? As to this great doctrine, indispensably connected as it is with the Trinity, the fall of man, the atonement, renewal by the Holy Ghost, how little room for allowable diversity of opinion. On this subject the bishops, if true to the Bible and to the Articles, must require sound views and an honest subscription. Here it is that the Protestant character of our Church is most prominent and emphatic. On other points, such as that disputed between philosophers and divines in all ages as to fate and free will, the free agency of man and the decrees of God, or between different denominations of Christians as to Church polity, the Church evidently speaks with a studied comprehensiveness, or an expressive brevity, which stops where some would have her to go on. Accordingly, ever since their adoption, all orders of her clergy have been permitted to differ on these points: they were not the grounds of the Reformation. But as to the great doctrine of man's justification before God, she speaks in language too clear, too studied, too strong, to be misunderstood. She will allow of no views of good works, of sacraments, or

of observances of any kind, which interfere with this. Here she is jealous, as God himself is jealous, who will not give His glory to another, or His praise to graven images. It becomes those who would not only retain the name, but the character, of Protestant for our Church, to remember that this is her distinctive character. There are those who would lay aside both the nature and character. Whatever, therefore, either as to theory, practice, or ceremony, seeks to undermine this, or weaken it, is to be firmly resisted.

CONFORMITY AS TO WORSHIP.

We also promise before ordination to conform to the worship of the Church. Does this mean that we only obligate ourselves to lead the devotions of the people by using the appointed services, while reserving to ourselves the right of assent or dissent in regard to the doctrine thereof? This would be like making the Articles only articles of peace, which must not be spoken or preached against; while it is not required that they be actually believed in their obvious meaning. Surely no honest and conscientious man could consent to be uttering falsehoods before God and the congregation, by using words, the plain and acknowledged meaning of which he rejects. But still, as there is a latitude to be allowed even in the interpretation of some of the Articles, well weighed and carefully expressed as they are, so must there be yet greater in the more diffuse and varied services appointed for the different occasions of worship, and administration of the ordinances of religion; especially when we consider how often the figurative language of scripture is introduced. Ministers, therefore, with equal conscientiousness may use certain words in these services while attaching a somewhat different meaning to them. It is our duty to endeavor to ascertain their true meaning by reference to the scriptures, when they are taken from the scripture, also to the articles

and homilies, and by comparing them together as used in the different prayers. Having thus examined them, we must use them in the sense which seems most probable, still holding ourselves liable to the judgment of those in authority, should we deviate too far from the generally received interpretation. When those in authority feel bound to judge or decide, then must the Articles be their chief guide, having been expressly adopted for that purpose in our Mother Church, and evidently transferred to our own for the same.

The history of our Liturgy and Offices, especially as to a few changes made therein, both in our own and Mother Church, justifies the opinion, expressed above, as to the allowed liberty of interpretation. While the Articles continued untouched, as the exposition and test of our doctrine, certain verbal changes did take place at a certain period, in other parts of the Prayer Book, avowedly for the gratification of some who desired the restoration of a few words endeared to them by long use. Whoever will read the history of the Church as to certain changes, in the days of Elizabeth, cannot but assent to the view here taken. None such, however, were allowed in the articles, to make them correspond as to language, and thus give countenance to the belief that a change in doctrine was also designed. The Reformers may with propriety, at that time, have consented to these few verbal changes in the Offices, while retaining the doctrine for which they had contended, and for which some had died, most distinctly and prominently set forth in the Articles, Homilies, and Prayers. Moreover, the terms used did not contradict the Articles, but were fairly susceptible of a sense in perfect consistency with the language and doctrine of the Articles. Could they have foreseen the use which has been made of the concessions referred to, even by some professed Protestants, they might, true to the spirit of the Reformation, have rather died, than bequeath to posterity

such a pretext for Romanising. We can never believe that they did knowingly and designedly adopt and require to be used two standards at open variance with each other. Such dishonor must not rest on their character. I do not mean to engage in a full examination of the documents in the early history of the Church which bear on this question, as that would exceed the limits of a lecture. Your past reading enables you to understand them sufficiently for my present purpose, though the circumstances of the times make it proper that you should examine them more carefully. As to our American Church, whoever will read Bishop White's account of the changes made in the English Prayer Book, by those who adapted it to our own country, will see proofs and illustration of the view which I have taken. Few as were the bishops and clergy concerned in the preparation of our Prayer Book, and many as were the considerations leading to unanimity of sentiment, still the principle of compromise as to language was called for and thought to be allowable. Let the following instance suffice. In the Convention which adopted our Communion Office, himself and Bishop Seabury were the only Bishops present. He says, "it lay very near the heart of Bishop Seabury, to have certain words which were left out of King Edward's ^{second} record book, restored to their proper place, viz : the words of oblation, which are also found in the Prayer Book of the Church of Scotland. Bishop White assented to the proposition, seeing nothing unsound and superstitious in them. They were accordingly adopted. But Bishop White adds, that he should zealously have opposed their admission, had he supposed that they could reasonably be thought to imply what some now impute to them. So many, however, have, since then, attempted to fasten on them a meaning quite different from that in which they were understood by Bishop White, that before his death he felt it his duty in several of his writings to protest against it. He also

informs us that in the house of clerical and lay delegates, "a disposition was manifested to oppose the introduction of these words, which, however, was counteracted by a few pertinent words of the president." What could these pertinent words have been, but words disowning the meaning which some now wish to attach to them. See his Memoirs, p. 154. Are we not justified then in supposing that such was the case with those who consented to some verbal changes in the English Prayer Book? We are strengthened in our view of this subject from the fact, that ever since these changes were made, the great body of bishops and clergy of the Church of England and America, have construed those passages by the plain meaning of the Articles, and in opposition to any other construction. Such being the case, I do not see, but that the best regulated conscience may subscribe to the doctrine and worship of the Church, although there may be regret felt that some few words were admitted into the services. On the same ground that some object to our subscription, there is probably not a Church in Christendom, but might be complained of. Some of the continental Churches have a few expressions in certain places yet stronger, although as explained in other places, they so lose their objectionable character, as to justify the most faithful and pious in subscribing. Should our standards, taken as a whole, be compared with some others, they would be found to contain less to trouble the minds of the most conscientious. On the subject of the Divine Decrees, for instance, where she speaks with a studied latitude, which has always secured toleration, if not perfect peace, others speak with a positiveness which can scarce admit of a conscientious subscription, unless the doctrine be fully embraced; and this of course has caused much complaint and unhappiness. On the subject of the ministry also, while some have confidently affirmed theirs to be according to God's word, and of his express appointment,

in our article there is no such declaration in behalf of our own, and in the preface to the ordination service the fact only of its existence from the times of the apostles, as seen in their writings and ancient authors, is affirmed. This preface being the same now as in the first Prayer Book, and probably written by Cranmer himself, will be fairly interpreted by a reference to his writings, and those of his associates, which will show that no extreme sense is to be put upon it. Though a higher view may be taken of the ministry by some, it must be esteemed only as a private opinion drawn from scripture or tradition, and not the authoritative teaching of the Church.

Conformity to the worship may also comprehend not only the use of the services with a hearty assent to the doctrines contained in them, but their use according to the direction of the canons and rubrics. In this also there has been, and must be some allowance made for diversity of opinion as to the meaning and obligation of certain rubrics; and not only this, but a sound discretion as to the deviation from the letter of the rubric, when circumstances may constrain, or the principle of *mercy being better than sacrifice* shall make it a duty. That this is a matter in which conscience should be exercised cannot be doubted. Nor can it be doubted but that a contracted view of the subject has sometimes been taken. I remember in the early part of my ministry to have held a conversation with a minister, who maintained that even in meeting with a few servants in their cabins, I had no right to speak to them until I had first gone through all the service of the Church. Now, however proper it may be to use it partially on other occasions, the service was evidently intended for public use in the Church. In England the law is, that the minister shall use this form "in public prayer and administration of the sacraments and none other." In our Church, the canon is, "that every minister shall before all sermons and lectures, and on all other occasions of public worship, use the Book of Common

Prayer as the same is, or may be established by the authority of the General Convention. And in performing such service, no other prayers shall be used, than those prescribed by such book." That is,—no other shall be substituted for it, mixed up with it, or added to it. As to the pulpit exercises, there is no prohibition of prayer in connection with the sermon, either in our own or Mother Church. In the latter it has always more or less prevailed. In many of the printed sermons of the old divines, we have the prayers published along with them. After one of the Homilies, that on Disobedience, we have a specimen of such prayers. It is still the custom with many of the English clergy to have short prayers before and after sermon. In our American Church, it was formerly the general custom to have the Lord's Prayer and a collect before sermon, and one or more collects after sermon. The former practice has ceased at the recommendation of the House of Bishops. It is well known as to the latter, that Bishop White not only defended the practice, but at one time pursued the old English custom of writing and using a short prayer after sermon, which was specially adapted to it. At this time, when the disposition is so strong in some persons to introduce new things, or restore old ones, which have become obsolete, I would not say anything to encourage changes, but it has ever seemed to me, that a very short prayer carefully composed, and written down as formerly at the close of the sermon, being especially adapted to the same, would be better than the present plan, where the same collects are so often repeated, and these sometimes not very suitable to the discourse.

I have only one other remark to make, and that is in the way of caution that you do not fall into the error of some, who confound the custom of a part of the Church with the law of the whole Church. The Church leaves it optional with the minister to say, in the creed, "he descended into Hell," or to omit it, or to use in its place, "he went into

the place of departed spirits;" but I have heard those who use the first form of words denounce those who omitted them or used the substitute, as being irregular persons. Now, "where no law is there is no transgression." Again, it is customary with some to bow at the name of Jesus in the creed, and I have heard those denounced as neither Churchmen nor men of reverence, who did not so do; whereas there is no rule whatever on the subject. So, as to the use of the surplice, those are sometimes condemned who do not wear it, although at our organization in this country the rubric enjoining it, and which had been ever objected to by some in England, was purposely left out. The proper rule as to all such subjects is, not to differ merely for the sake of differing. Where there is no law, and things are regarded as indifferent by us, where we are not opposed to them on principle, or as inexpedient and injurious to the cause of piety, then it is best to conform to the custom of those around us. At any rate, let charity be observed as to those who differ from us.

THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE TO THE BISHOP.

On one of the vows in the Ordination Service I add a few words. You will be required "reverently to obey your Bishop and other chief Ministers, who, according to the canons of the Church, may have the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments." The canons which appoint the rulers in the Church, specify, also, their rights and duties, as well as yours, and, of course, are to be to them and you an authoritative guide. If the rulers interpret them falsely, and seek to enforce them wrongfully, they are liable to the discipline of the Church. If you misunderstand and disobey them, then are you subject to the same. But if there be a right disposition on

their part toward you, and a respectful deference on yours to their office and experience, it can seldom happen that a serious difference will occur. The Bishops need not be anxious to increase their authority, since from the very nature of their office, and a thousand things connected with it, there does necessarily arise an influence, and a power, and responsibility full as great as any man should desire or be willing to have. By reason of these things they are, to a certain extent, chief Pastors, having the care of all the Churches resting upon them. Without invading the established rights of the ministers under them, they are the Pastors of Pastors, and thereby, in some measure, Chief Shepherds of all the flocks. Happy is the relation between bishops and their clergy when such a feeling animates their hearts.

As to the promise of obedience to other chief ministers, its exercise is not required of us in this country, though the clause has been retained from the English Prayer Book. We have none such to aid the bishops in their duties, as in the Mother Church. It was probably thought that the time might come when such would be needed and appointed. In place of obedience to such, let me recommend to you that respectful deference which is due from young ministers to the older and more experienced, though they be not set over you by canon law. Let me also, in this connexion, enjoin it upon you to observe most scrupulously the rights of all your brethren, as established by the canons. Be very careful how you consent to perform any of those ministerial offices which properly belong to another, without most sufficient reasons. Unless there be such, do not even permit the application for the consent to be made, but rather anticipate and prevent it, lest the feelings of a brother be wounded. As you would firmly maintain your own rights against what you might regard the encroachments of a bishop who should claim all the privileges of a pastor among your people, so should you scrupulously avoid any thing interfering

with the rights of a brother. Bishops are bound by canon to refrain from the performance of any official acts in other dioceses without the consent of their brother bishops. They are also bound, by honor and religion, not even to ask the privilege of doing it, or consent that it be asked, without very sufficient causes. So should all other ministers act towards their brethren. If, my young friends, I may be pardoned the egotism, I would, for the sake of enforcing by example that which I recommend in words, state, that I have ever been careful to observe this rule, and am more and more convinced of the importance of a strict adherence to it. Especially since my elevation to the Episcopate have I felt bound to the most scrupulous observance of it. Not only have I refused to perform the marriage ceremony in cases of a very peculiar character, which might have justified it, but, in travelling through the diocese, I even positively decline baptizing infants, except in vacant parishes, and in cases where the ministers themselves ask and urge it, for special reasons. I do not now baptize even my own grandchildren, choosing rather to act as sponsor, and present them to him whose duty and privilege it is to present them unto the Lord.

CONCLUSION.

My advices are now concluded. They are the result of no little reading of the best authors on the pastoral office, and of the observation and experience of forty years, save one, spent in ministerial and Episcopal duty. Had I to go over those years again, I should hope, by Divine grace, to correct some errors into which I have fallen, through inexperience, through want of instruction and of example, and to perform all the duties of the sacred office in a manner more accordant with the rules now delivered unto you. I pray, that when you shall come to look back upon your ministry, you may be able to do it with a conscience far less troubled with a sense of numerous and great deficiencies than is the conscience of him who now bids you an affectionate farewell.



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Your affectionate Brother,
WM. WHITE.

RT. REV. THOS C. BROWNELL.

I do cordially concur in the foregoing sentiments of the Presiding Bishop.

JOHN HENRY HOBART.

BRISTOL, Jan. 4, 1822.

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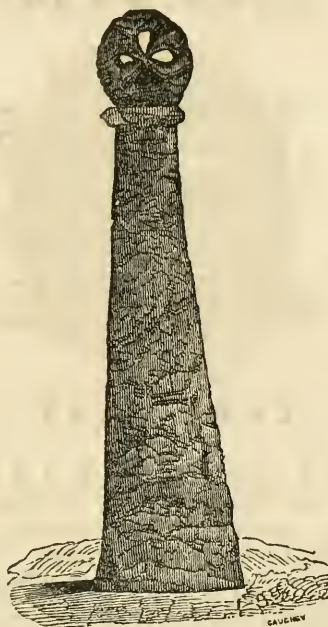
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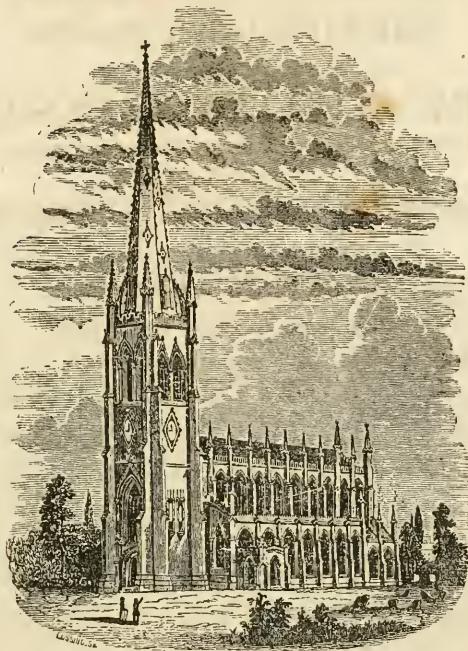
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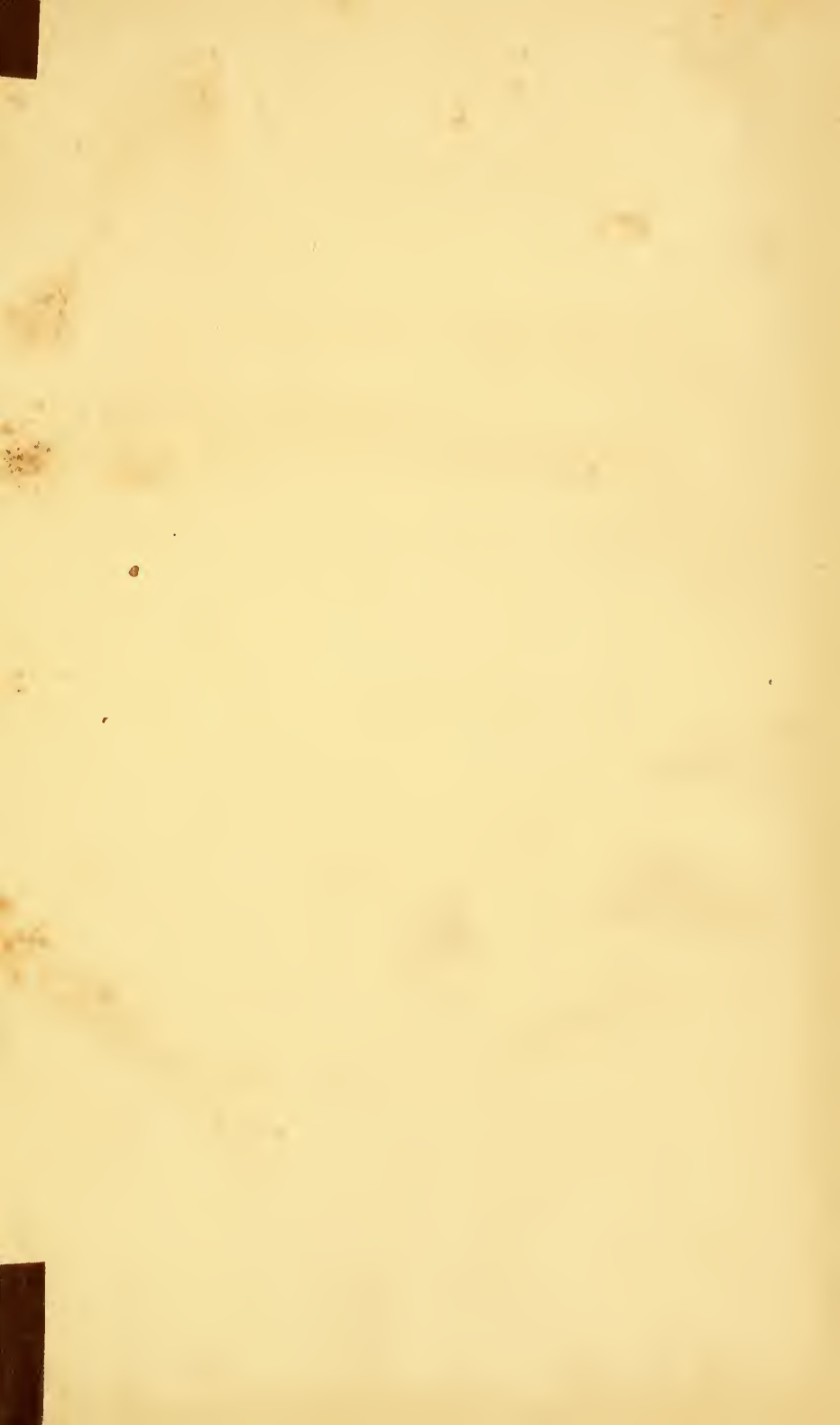
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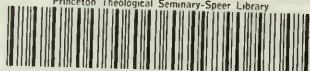
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